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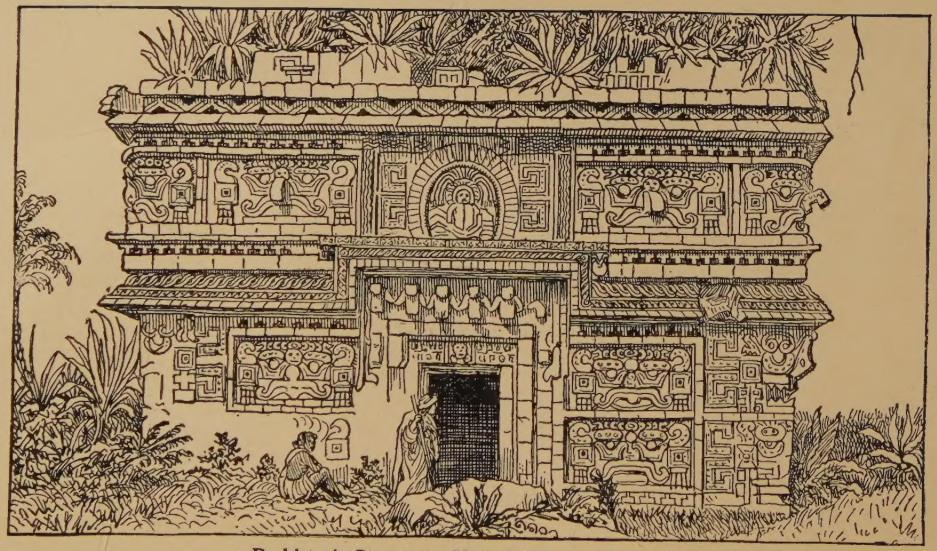

Prehistoric Structure, Uxmal (Yucatan) (p. 76).

THE STORY OF EXTINCT CIVILIZATIONS OF THE WEST

BY

ROBERT E. ANDERSON, M. A., F. A. S.

AUTHOR OF
EXTINCT CIVILIZATIONS OF THE EAST

Venient annis saecula seris
Quibus Oceanus vincula rerum
Laxet, et ingens pateat tellus
Tethys que novos detegat orbes.
—SENECA.

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EXTINCT CIVILIZATIONS OF THE WEST

INTRODUCTION

THROUGHOUT all the periods of European history, ancient or modern, no age has been more remarkable for events of first-rate importance than the latter half of the fifteenth century. The rise of the New Learning, the "discovery of the world and of man," the displacement of many outworn beliefs, these with other factors produced an awakening that startled kings and nations. Then felt they like Balboa, when

> with eagle eyes
> He stared at the Pacific, and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surmise
> Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

It was at this historical juncture that the "middle ages" came to an end, and modern Europe had its beginning. (See Chapter II.)

Why was Europe so long in discovering the vast Continent which all the time lay beyond the Western Ocean? Simply because every skipper and every "Board of Admiralty" believed that this world on which we live and move is flat and level. They did not at all realize the fact that it is *ball-*

shaped; and that when a ball is very large (say, as large as a balloon), then any small portion of the surface must appear flat and level to a fly or "mite" traveling in that vicinity. Homer believed that our world is a flat and level plain, with a great river, Oceanus, flowing round it; and for many ages that seemed a very natural and sufficient theory. The Pythagoreans, it is true, argued that our earth must be spherical, but why? Oh, said they, because in geometry the sphere is the "most perfect" of all solid figures. Aristotle, being scientific, gave better reasons for believing that the earth is spherical or ball-shaped. He said the shadow of the earth is always round like the shadow of a ball; and the shadow of the earth can be seen during any eclipse of the moon; therefore, all who see that shadow on the moon's disk know, or ought to know, that the earth is ball-shaped. Another reason given by Aristotle is that the altitude of any star above the horizon changes when the observer travels north or south. For example, if at London a star appears to be 40° above the northern horizon, and at York the same star at the same instant appears 42½°, it is evident that 2½° is the difference (increase) of altitude at York compared with London. Such an observation shows that the road from London to York is not over a flat, level plane, but over the curved surface of a sphere, the arc of a circle, in fact.

Herodotus, the father of history, was a good geographer and an experienced traveler, yet his only conception of the world was as a flat, wide-extending surface. In Egypt he was told how Pharaoh Necho had sent a crew of Phenicians to explore the coast of Africa by setting out from the

Red Sea, and how they sailed south till they had *the sun on their right hand.* "Absurd!" says Herodotus, in his naïve manner, "this story I can not believe." In Egypt, as in Greece or Europe generally, the sun rises on the left hand, and at noon casts a shadow pointing north; whereas in South Africa the sun at noon casts a shadow pointing south, and sunrise is therefore on the *right hand.* The honest sailors had told the truth; they had merely "crossed the line," without knowing it. If Herodotus had known that the world was spherical or ball-shaped, he could easily have understood that by traveling due south the sun must at last appear at noon to the north instead of the south. A counterpart to the story of the Phenician sailors occurs in Pliny: he tells how some ambassadors came to the Roman Emperor Claudius from an island in the south of Asia, and when in Italy were much astonished to see the sun at noon to the south, casting shadows to the north. They also wondered, he says, to see the Great Bear and other groups of stars which had never been visible in their native land (Nat. Hist., vi, 22).

That there were islands or even a continent in the Western Ocean was a tradition not infrequent in classical and medieval times, as we shall presently see, but to place a continent in the Southern Ocean was a greater stretch of imagination. The great outstanding problem of the sources of the Nile probably suggested this Southern Continent to some. Ptolemy, the great Egyptian geographer, even formed the conjecture that the Southern Continent was joined to Africa by a broad isthmus, as indicated in certain maps. Such a

connection of the two continents would at once dispose of the story that the Phenician sailors had "doubled the Cape." In several maps after the time of Columbus, Australia is extended westward in order to pass muster for the Southern Continent.

It is with a Western Continent, however, that we are now mainly concerned. What lands were

Imaginary Continent, south of Africa and Asia. [The cardinal points are shown by the four winds.] Beginning of the fifteenth century. The word Brumæ=the winter solstices.

imagined by the ancients in the far West under the setting sun? The mighty ocean beyond Spain was to the Greeks and Latins a place of dread and mystery.

"Stout was his heart and girt with triple brass," says the Roman poet, "who first hazarded his weak vessel on the pitiless ocean."

Even the western parts of the Mediterranean were shrunk from, according to the Odyssey, without

speaking of the horrors of the great ocean beyond. "Beyond Gades," i. e., scarcely outside of the Pillars of Hercules, the extreme limit of the ancient world, "no man," said Pindar, "however daring, could pass; only a god might voyage those waters!"

In spite of the dread which the ancient mariners felt for the great Western Ocean, their poets found it replete with charm and mystery. The imagination rested upon those golden sunsets, and the tales of marvel which, after long intervals, sea-borne sailors had told of distant lands in the West. The poets placed there the happy home destined for the souls of heroes. Thus (Odys. iv, 561):

> No snow
> Is there, nor yet great storm nor any rain,
> But always ocean sendeth forth the breeze
> Of the shrill West, and bloweth cool on men.

So far Homer. His contemporary, Hesiod, thus describes the Elysian Fields as islands under the setting sun:

> There on Earth's utmost limits Zeus assigned
> A life, a seat, distinct from human kind,
> Beside the deepening whirlpools of the Main,
> In those blest Isles where Saturn holds his reign,
> Apart from Heaven's immortals calm they share,
> A rest unsullied by the clouds of care:
> And yearly thrice with sweet luxuriance crown'd
> Springs the ripe harvest from the teeming Ground.

The poet Pindar places in the same mysterious West "the castle of Chronos" (i. e., "Old Time"), "where o'er the Isles of the Blest ocean breezes

blow, and flowers gleam with gold, some from the land on glistening trees, while others the water feeds; and with bracelets of these they entwine their hands, and make crowns for their heads."

Vesper, the star of evening, was called Hesperus by the Greeks; and hence the Hesperides, daughters of the Western Star, had the task of watching the golden apples planted by the goddess Hera in the garden of the gods, on the other side of the river Oceanus. One of the labors of Hercules was to fetch three of those mystic apples for the king of Mycenae. The poet Euripides thus refers to the Gardens of the West, when the Chorus wish to fly "over the Adriatic wave":

> Or to the famed Hesperian plains,
> Whose rich trees bloom with gold,
> To join the grief-attunèd strains
> My winged progress hold;
> Beyond whose shores no passage gave
> The Ruler of the purple wave.

Of all the lands imagined to lie in the Western Ocean by the Greeks, the most important was "Atlantis." Some have thought it may possibly have been a prehistoric discovery of America. In any case it has exercised the ingenuity of a good many modern scientists. The tale of Atlantis we owe to Plato himself, who perhaps learned it in Egypt, just as Herodotus picked up there the account of the circumnavigation of Africa by the Phenician mariners.

"When Solon was in Egypt," says Plato, "he had talk with an aged priest of Sais who said, 'You Greeks are all children: you know but of one deluge, whereas there have been many de-

structions of mankind both by flood and fire.' . . . In the distant Western Ocean lay a continent larger than Libya and Asia together." . . .

In this Atlantis there had grown up a mighty state whose kings were descended from Poseidon and had extended their sway over many islands and over a portion of the great continent; even Libya up to the gates of Egypt, and Europe as far as Tyrrhenia, submitted to their sway. . . . Afterward came a day and night of great floods and earthquakes; Atlantis disappeared, swallowed by the waves.

Geologists and geographers have seriously tried to find evidence of Atlantis having existed in the Atlantic, whether as a portion of the American continent, or as a huge island in the ocean which could have served as a stepping-stone between the Western World and the Eastern. From a series of deep-sea soundings ordered by the British, American, and German Governments, it is now very well known that in the middle of the Atlantic basin there is a ridge, running north and south, whose depth is less than 1,000 fathoms, while the valleys east and west of it average 3,000 fathoms. At the Azores the North Atlantic ridge becomes broader. The theory is that a part of the ridge-plateau was the Atlantis of Plato that "disappeared swallowed by the waves." (Nature, xv, 158, 553, xxvii, 25; Science, June 29, 1883.)

Buffon, the naturalist, with reference to fauna and flora, dated the separation of the new and old world "from the catastrophe of Atlantis" (Epoques, ix, 570); and Sir Charles Lyell confessed a temptation to "accept the theory of an Atlantis island in the northern Atlantic." (Geology, p. 141.)

The following account "from an historian of the fourth century B. C." is another possible reference to a portion of America—from a translation "delivered in English," 1576.

Selenus told Midas that without this worlde there is a continent or percell of dry lande which in greatnesse (as hee reported) was unmeasureable; that it nourished and maintained, by the benifite of the greene meadowes and pasture plots, sundrye bigge and mighty beastes; that the men which inhabite the same climate exceede the stature of us twise, and yet the length of there life is not equale to ours.

The historian Plutarch, in his Morals, gives an account of Ogygia, with an illusion to a continent, possibly America:

An island, Ogygia, lies in the arms of the Ocean, about five days' sail west from Britain. . . . The adjacent sea is termed the Saturnian, and the continent by which the great sea is circularly environed is distant from Ogygia about 5,000 stadia, but from the other islands not so far. . . One of the men paid a visit to the great island, as they called Europe. From him the narrator learned many things about the state of men after death—the conclusion being that the souls of men arrive at the Moon, wherein lie the Elysian Fields of Homer.

The Greek historian, Diodorus Siculus, has a similar account with curious details of an "island" which might very well have been part of a continent. Columbus believed to the last that Cuba was a continent.

In the ocean, at the distance of several days' sailing to the west, there lies an island watered by several navigable rivers. Its soil is fertile, hilly, and of great beauty. . . .

There are country houses handsomely constructed, with summer-houses and flower-beds. The hilly district is covered with dense woods and fruit-trees of every kind. The inhabitants spend much time in hunting and thus procure excellent food. They have naturally a good supply of fish, their shores being washed by the ocean. . . . In a word this island seems a happy home for gods rather than for men (v. 19).

Another Greek writer, Lucian, in one of his witty dialogues, refers to an island in the Atlantic, that lies eighty days' sail westward of the Pillars of Hercules—the extreme limit of the ancient world, as has already been seen. Readers of Henry Fielding and admirers of Squire Western will remember how in the London of the eighteenth century the limits of Piccadilly westward was a tavern at Hyde Park corner called the *Hercules' Pillars,* on the site of the future Apsley House.*

Although neither Greek nor Roman navigators were likely to attempt a voyage into the ocean beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, yet a trading vessel from Carthage or Phenicia might easily have been driven by an easterly gale into, or even across, the Atlantic. Some involuntary discoveries were no doubt due to this chance, and the reports brought to Europe were probably the germs of such tales as the poets invented about the fair regions of the West. In Celtic literature, moreover, "Avalon" was placed far under the setting sun beyond the ocean—Avalon or "Glas-Inis" being to the bards the Land of the Dead, marvelous and mysterious.

* Tom Jones, xvi. chap. 2, 3, etc.

In English literature of the middle ages there is a remarkable passage relating to our present subject, which was written long before that rise of the New Learning mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. It is a statement made by Roger Bacon, the greatest of Oxonian scholars of the thirteenth century, who, long before the Renascence, did much to restore the study of science, especially in geography, chronology, and optics. In his Opus Majus, the elder Bacon wrote:

> More than the fourth part of the earth which we inhabit is still unknown to us. . . . It is evident therefore that between the extreme West and the confines of India, there must be a surface which comprises more than half the earth.

Though Roger Bacon, to use his own words, died "unheard, forgotten, buried," our recent historians place his name first in the great roll of modern science.

There now remains only one quotation to make from the ancients. We have been reserving it for two reasons—first, because it is a singularly happy anticipation of the discovery of the New World, so happy that it became a favorite stanza with the discoverer himself. This we learn from the life of the "Great Admiral," written by his son Ferdinand.

Secondly, because it adorns our title-page and has been characterized as "a lucky prophecy"—written in the first century A. D. The author, Seneca, was a dramatist as well as a philosopher, the lines occurring at the end of one of his choruses—Medea, 376. We may thus translate the prophetic stanza:

For at a distant date this ancient world
Will westward stretch its bounds, and then disclose
Beyond the Main a vast new Continent,
With realms of wealth and might.

CHAPTER I

PRE-COLUMBIAN DISCOVERIES OF AMERICA

1. *Norse Discovery.*—By glancing at a map of the north Atlantic, the reader will at once see that the natural approach from Europe to the Western Continent was by Iceland and Greenland—especially in those early days when ocean navigation was unknown. Iceland is nearer to Greenland than to Norway; and Greenland is part of America. But in Iceland there were Celtic settlers in the early centuries; and even King Arthur, according to the history of Geoffrey of Monmouth, sailed north to that "Ultima Thule." During the ninth century a Christian community had been established there under certain Irish monks. This early civilization, however, was destined to become presently extinct.

It was in A. D. 875, i. e., during the reign of Alfred the Great in England, that the Norse earl, Ingolf, led a colony to Iceland. More strenuous and savage than the Christian Celts whom they found there, the latter with their preaching monks soon sailed to the south, and left the Northmen masters of the island. The Norse colony under Ingolf was strongly reenforced by Norwegians who took refuge there to avoid the tyranny of

their king, Harold, the Fair-haired. Ingolf built the town Ingolfshof, named after him, and also Reikiavik, afterward the capital, named from the "reek" or steam of its hot springs. So important did this colony become that in the second generation the population amounted to 60,000.

Ingolf was admired by the poet James Montgomery (not to be confounded with Robert, whom Macaulay criticized so severely), who in 1819 thus wrote of him and his island:

> There on a homeless soil his foot he placed,
> Framed his hut-palace, colonized the waste,
> And ruled his horde with patriarchal sway
> —Where Justice reigns, 'tis Freedom to obey. . . .
> And Iceland shone for generous lore renowned,
> A northern light when all was gloom around.

The next year after Ingolf had come to Iceland, Gunnbiorn, a hardy Norseman, driven in his ship westerly, sighted a strange land. . . . About half a century later, judging by the Icelandic sagas, we learn that a wind-tossed vessel was thrown upon a coast far away which was called "Mickle Ireland" (*Irland it Mikla*)—[Winsor's Hist. America, i, 61].

Gunnbiorn's discovery was utilized by Erik the Red, another sea-rover, in A. D. 980, who sailed to it and, after three years' stay, returned with a favorable account—giving it the fair name *Greenland*. The Norse established two centers of population on Greenland. It is now believed that after doubling Cape Farewell, they built their first town near that head and the second farther north. The former, *Eystribygd* (i. e., "Easter Bigging"), developed into a large colony, having in the four-

teenth century 190 settlements, with a cathedral and eleven churches, and containing two cities and three or four monasteries. The second town, *Westribygd* (i. e., "Wester Bigging") had grown to ninety settlements and four churches in the same time.

The germ and root of that civilization (afterward extinct, as we shall see) was due to Leif the son of Red Erik, who visited Norway, the mother-country, at the very close of the tenth century.

Remains of a Norse Church at Katortuk, Greenland.

He found that the king and people there had enthusiastically embraced the new religion, *Christianity*. Leif presently shared their fervor, and decided to reject Woden, Thor, and the other gods of old Scandinavia. A priest was told off to accompany Leif back to Greenland, and preach the new faith. It was thus that a Christian civilization first found footing in arctic America.

The ruins of those early Christian churches (see illustration above) form most interesting objects in modern Greenland; near the chief ruin is a curious circular group of large stones.

The poet of "Greenland," to whom we have already referred, quotes from a Danish chronicle to the effect that, in the golden age of the colony, there were a hundred parishes to form the bishopric; and that the see was ruled by seventeen bishops from A. D. 1120 to 1408. Bishop Andrew is the last mentioned, ordained in 1408 by the Archbishop of Drontheim.

From the same authority we learn that according to some of the annals "the best wheat grew to perfection in the valleys; the forests were extensive; flocks and herds were numerous and very large and fat." The Cloister of St. Thomas was heated by pipes from a warm spring, and attached to the cloister was a richly cultivated garden.

After Leif, son of Erik, had introduced Christianity into Greenland, his next step was to extend the Norse civilization still farther within the American continent. News had reached him of a new land, with a level coast, lying nine days' sailing southwest of Greenland. Picking thirty-five men, Leif started for further exploration. One part of the new country was barren and rocky, therefore Leif named it *Helluland* (i. e., "Stone Land"), which appears to have been Newfoundland. Farther south they found a sandy shore, backed by a level forest country, which Leif named *Markland* (i. e., "Wood Land"), identified with Nova Scotia. After two days' sail, according to the saga account, having landed and explored the new continent along the banks of a river, they resolved to winter there. In one of these explorations a German called Tyrker found some grapes on a wild vine, and brought a specimen for the admiration of Leif and his party.

This country was therefore named *Vinland* (i. e., "Wine Land"), and is identified with New England, part of Rhode Island, and Massachusetts.*

Our Greenland poet thus refers to Leif's landing:

> Wineland the glad discoverers called that shore,
> And back the tidings of its riches bore;
> But soon return'd with colonizing bands.

The Norsemen founded a regular settlement in Vinland, establishing there a Christian community related to that of Greenland. Leif's brother, Korvald, explored the interior in all directions. With the natives, who are called "Skraelings" in the sagas, they traded in furs; these people, who seemed dwarfish to the Norsemen, used leathern boats and were no doubt Eskimos:

> A stunted, stern, uncouth, amphibious stock.

The principal settler in Vinland was Thorfinn, an Icelander, who had married a daughter-in-law of Erik the Red. She persuaded Thorfinn to sail to the new country in order to make a permanent settlement there. In the year 1007 A. D. he sailed with 160 men, having live stock and other colonial equipments. After three years he returned to Greenland, his wife having given birth to a son during their first year in Vinland. From this son, Snorre, it is claimed by some Norwegian historians, that Thorwaldsen, the eminent Danish

* Prof. R. B. Anderson says, "The basin of the Charles River should be selected as the most probable scene of the visits of Leif Erikson, etc" [*v.* map.]

VINLAND
OF THE
NORSE SETTLERS,
OR
NEW ENGLAND
OF THE
PURITANS.
MASSACHUSETTS
VINLAND
CONNECTICUT
RHODE ISLAND
Danvers
SALEM
BOSTON
TRACK OF GOSNOLD'S EXPEDITION
Cape Cod
PLYMOUTH
Cape Cod Bay
NEW BEDFORD
PROVIDENCE
HARTFORD
Connecticut River
NORWICH
NEW LONDON
NEW HAVEN
Bridgeport
Thames R.
LONG ISLAND SOUND
BLOCK I?
MARTHA'S VINEYARD
NANTUKET
ATLANTIC OCEAN

sculptor is descended. After the time of Thorfinn, the settlement in Vinland continued to flourish, having a good export trade in timber with Greenland. In 1121 A. D. according to the Icelandic saga, the bishop, Erik Upsi, visited Vinland, that country being, like Iceland and Greenland, included in his bishopric. The last voyage to Vinland for timber, according to the sagas, was in 1347.

Professor Horsford, of Cambridge, Mass., finds the site of Norumbega, mentioned in various old maps, on the River Charles, near Waltham, Mass., and maintains that town to be identical with Vinland of the Norsemen. To prove his belief in this theory, the professor built a tower commemorating the Norse discoveries. He argued that Norumbega was a corruption by the Indians of the word *Norvegr,* a Norse form of "Norway."

The abandonment of Vinland by the Norse settlers may be compared with that of Gosnold's expedition to the same region near the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Gosnold was sent to plant an English colony in America, after the failure of Sir Walter Raleigh's settlement at Roanoke (North Carolina); and the coast explored corresponded exactly to that which the Norse settlers had named Vinland, lying between the sites of Boston and New York. He gave the name Cape Cod to that promontory, and also named the islands Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, and the Elizabeth group. Selecting one of these for settling a colony, he built on it a storehouse and fort. The scheme, however, failed, owing to the threats of the natives and the scarcity of supplies, and all

the colonists sailed from Massachusetts, just as the Norse settlers had done many generations previously.

The expedition of Gosnold to Vinland, however, bore good fruit, from the favorable report of the new country which he made at home. The merchants of Bristol fitted out two ships under Martin Pring, and in the first voyage a great part of Maine (lying north of Massachusetts) was explored, and the coast south to Martha's Vineyard, where Gosnold had been. This led to profitable traffic with the natives, and three years later Pring made a more complete survey of Maine.

Vinland was also the scene of the famous landing of the Mayflower, bringing its Puritans from England. It was in Cape Cod Bay that she was first moored. After exploring the new country, just as Leif Erikson had done so many generations previously, they chose a place on the west side of the bay and named the little settlement "Plymouth," after the last English port from which they had sailed. Farther north, still in Vinland, they soon founded two other towns, "Salem" and "Boston." Those three settlements have ever since been important centers of energy and intelligence in Massachusetts, as well as memorials of the Norse occupation of Vinland.

On the occasion of a public statue being erected in Boston, Mass., to the memory of Leif Erikson, a committee of the Massachusetts Historical Society formally decided thus: "It is antecedently probable that the Northmen discovered America in the early part of the eleventh century."

Prof. Daniel Wilson, in his learned work Pre-

historic Man (ii, 83, 85), thus gives his opinion as to the Norse colony:

> With all reasonable doubt as to the accuracy of details, there is the strongest probability in favor of the authenticity of the American Vinland.

Of the Norse colonies in Greenland there are some undoubted remains, one being a stone in-

The Dighton Stone in the Taunton River, Massachusetts.

scription in *runes,* proving that it was made before the Reformation, when that mode of writing was forbidden by law. The stone is four miles beyond Upernavik. The inscription, according to Professor Rask, runs thus:

> Erling the son of Sigvat, and Enride Oddsoen,
> Had cleared the place and raised a mound
> On the Friday after Rogation-day;

—date either 1135 or 1170.

Rafn, the celebrated Danish archeologist, states as the result of many years' research, that America was repeatedly visited by the Icelanders in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries; that the estuary of the St. Lawrence was their chief station; that they had coasted southward to Carolina, everywhere introducing some Christian civilization among the natives.

A supposed rock memorial of the Norsemen is the Dighton Stone in the Taunton River, Mas-

The Dighton Stone. Fig. 2.

sachusetts; one of its sentences, according to Professor Rafn, being:

"Thorfinn with 151 Norse seafaring men took possession of this land."

The figures and letters (whether runic or merely Indian) inscribed on the Dighton Rock have been copied by antiquaries at the following dates: 1680, 1712, 1730, 1768, 1788, 1807, 1812. The above illustration (Fig. 2) shows the last mentioned.

There have been many probable traces of ancient Norsemen found in America, besides those already given. At Cape Cod, in the last generation,

a number of hearth-stones were found under a layer of peat. A more famous relic was the skeleton dug up in Fall River, Mass., with an ornamental belt of metal tubes made from fragments of flat brass; there were also some arrow-heads of the same material. Longfellow, the New England poet, naturally had his attention directed to this discovery (made, 1831), and founded on it his ballad The Skeleton in Armor, connecting it with the Round Tower at Newport. The latter, according to Professor Rafn, "was erected decidedly not later than the twelfth century."

I was a Viking old,
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told
No Saga taught thee! . . .
Far in the Northern Land
By the wild Baltic's strand
I with my childish hand
Tamed the ger-falcon.
Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow.
. . . . . .
Scarce had I put to sea
Bearing the maid with me—
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen!
Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
Stretching to leeward;
There for my lady's bower,
Built I this lofty tower
Which to this very hour
Stands looking seaward!

Sir Clements Markham, of the Royal Geographical Society, believes that the Norse settlers in Greenland were driven from their settlements there by Eskimos coming, not from the interior of America, but from West Siberia along the polar regions, by Wrangell Land [*v.* Journal, R. G. S., 1865, and Arctic Geography, 1875].

There was much curiosity from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century as to the site of the lost colonies of Greenland which had so long flourished. In 1568 and 1579 the King of Denmark sent two expeditions, the latter in charge of an Englishman, but no traces were found. At the beginning of the eighteenth century some light was thrown upon the problem by a missionary called Egede, who first described the ruins and relics observable on the west coast. By the success of his preaching among the Greenlanders for fifteen years, assisted by other gospel missionaries, the Moravians were induced to found their settlements in the country, principally in the southwest.

It seems probable that in early times the climate of Iceland was milder than it now is. Columbus, some fifteen years before his great voyage across the Atlantic, sailed to this northern "Thule," and reports that there was no ice. If so, it is surely possible that Greenland also may have been greener and more attractive than during the recent centuries. Why should it not at one time have been fully deserving of the name by which we still know it? Some would explain the change in climatic conditions by the closing in of ice-packs. At present Greenland is buried deep under a vast, solid ice-cap from which only a few

of the highest peaks protrude to show the position of the submerged mountains, but at former periods, according to geologists, there were gardens and farms flourishing under a genial climate. Others suppose that, were the ice removed, we should see an archipelago of elevated islands.

2. *Celtic Discovery of America.*—We have already glanced at the fact that when the Norsemen first seized Iceland they found that island inhabited by Irish Celts. These Christianized Celts made way before the savage invaders, who did not accept the Catholic religion till about the close of the tenth century. Sailing south, those dispossessed Irish probably joined their brother Celts who had already long held a district on the eastern coast of North America, which some Norse skippers called "White Man's Land," and also *Irland-it-Mikla* (i. e., "Mickle Ireland"). Professor Rafn places this district on the coast of Carolina. A learned memoir, published 1851, attempts to prove that the mysterious "mound-builders" of the Ohio Valley were of the same race as the settlers on Mickle Ireland, and related to the "white-bearded men" who established an extinct civilization in Mexico. A French antiquary, 1875, identified Mickle Ireland with Ontario and Quebec. Beauvois, in his Elysée transatlantique, derives the name Labrador from the *Innis Labrada*, an island mentioned in an ancient Irish romance.* Another Irish discoverer was St. Brandan,† Abbot of Cluainfert, Ireland (died

* As to the Irish claim for the pre-Columbian discovery of America, see also Humboldt (Cosmos, ii, 607), and Laing (Heimsk., i, 186).

† MS. Book of Lismore.

May 16, 577), who was told that far in the ocean lay an island which was the land promised to the saints. St. Brandan set sail in company with seventy-five monks, and spent seven years upon the ocean in two voyages, discovering this island and many others equally marvelous, including one which turned out to be the back of a huge fish, upon which they celebrated Easter.*

Among the Celtic claimants for discovery we must also include the Welsh, who lay stress upon certain resemblances between their language and the dialects of the native Americans. A better argument is the historical account taken from their annals about the expedition of Prince Madoc, son of a Welsh chieftain, who sailed due west in the year 1170, after the rumor of the Norse discoveries had reached Britain. He landed on a vast and fertile continent where he settled 120 colonists. On his return to Wales he fitted out a second fleet of ten ships, but the annals give no report of the result. Several writers state that the place of landing was near the Gulf of Mexico: Hakluyt connecting the discovery with Mexico (1589) and again with the West Indies (edition of 1600). In the seventeenth century some authors wished to substantiate the story of Prince Madoc, in order that the British claim to America should antedate the Spanish claim through Columbus. Prince Madoc is, to most readers, only known by Southey's poem.†

3. *Basque Discovery of America.*—Who are the Basque people? A curious race of Spanish

* The story is given by Humboldt and D'Avezac.

† Some quotations from Southey's poem are given in Chapters V, VI.

mountaineers, who have been as great a puzzle to ethnologists and historians as their language has been to philologists and scholars. We know, however, that in former times they were nearly all seamen, making long voyages to the north for whale and Newfoundland cod fishing. They have produced excellent navigators; and possibly preceded Columbus in discovering America. Sebastian, the lieutenant of Magellan, was one of the Basque race. Magellan did not live to complete his famous voyage, therefore Sebastian was the first actual circumnavigator of our globe.

François Michel, in his work Le Pays Basque, says that the Basque sailors knew the coasts of Newfoundland a century before the time of Columbus; and that it was from one of these ocean mariners that he first learned the existence of a continent beyond the Atlantic. Other arguments are derived from comparing the peculiarities of the Basque tongue with those of the American dialects. Whitney, an American scholar, concludes that "No other dialect of the Old World so much resembles the American languages in structure as the Basque."

4. *Jewish Discovery of America.*—There is one claim for the discovery of America, which, though quite improbable, if not impossible, has been upheld and sanctioned by many scholarly works in several languages. It is argued that the red Indians represent the ten "Lost Tribes" of the Hebrew people who had been deported to Assyria and Media (*v.* Extinct Civilizations of the East, p. 109). The theory was first started by some Spanish priest-missionaries, and has since been defended by many learned divines both

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COLBY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

in England and America, one leading argument being certain similarities in the languages. Catlin (*v.* Smithsonian Report, 1885) enumerates many analogies which he found among the Western Indians. The most authoritative statement is that of Lord Kingsborough in the well-known Mexican Antiquities (1830–'48), chiefly in Vol. VII. Some writers actually quote a statement made in the Mormon Bible! Leading New England divines, like Mayhew and Cotton Mather, espoused the cause with similar faith, as well as Roger Williams and William Penn.

5. *The Italian Discovery of America.*—Not through Columbus the Genoese, or Amerigo Vespucci, the Florentine, although they were certainly Italians, but by two Venetians, Nicolo and Antonio Zeno. In A. D. 1380 or 1390 these brothers Zeni were shipwrecked in the North Atlantic, and, when staying in Frislanda, made the acquaintance of a sailor who, after twenty-six years' absence, had returned, giving them the following report:

"Being driven west in a gale, he found an island with civilized inhabitants, who had Latin books, but could not speak Norse, and whose country was called Estotiland, while a region on the mainland, farther south, to which he had also gone, was called Drogeo. Here he had met with cannibals. Still farther south was a great country with towns and temples."

The two brothers Zeni finally conveyed this account to another brother in Venice, together with a map of those distant regions, but these documents remained neglected till 1558, when a descendant compiled a book to embody the informa-

tion, accompanied by a map, now famous as "the Zeno map."

Humboldt, with reference to this map, remarks that it is singular that the name Frislanda should have been applied by Columbus to an island south of Iceland. Washington Irving (in his Life of Columbus) explains the book by a desire to appeal to the national pride of Italy, since, if true, the discovery of the brothers would antedate that of Columbus by a century.

Malte-Brun, the distinguished geographer, distinctly accepted the Zeni narrative as true, and believed that it was by colonists from Greenland that the Latin books had reached Estotiland. Another strong advocate afterward appeared in Mr. Major, an official in the map department of the British Museum, who believed that much of the map in question represented genuine information of the fourteenth century, mixed with some spurious parts inserted by the younger Zeno. Mr. Major's paper on The Site of the Lost Colony of Greenland Determined, and the pre-Columbian Discoveries of America Confirmed, appeared in R. Geog. Soc. Journal, 1873; *v.* also Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc., 1874. Nordenskjöld also accepted the chief results of this Italian discovery, and as an arctic explorer of experience, his opinion carries weight. Mercator and Hugo Grotius were also believers in the Zeni account.

CHAPTER II

"DISCOVERY OF THE WORLD AND OF MAN"

At the beginning of this book a reference was made to the great upheaval in European history called the "Renascence" (Fr. *renaissance*) or Revival of Learning. In 1453 the Turks took Constantinople, driving the Greek scholars to take refuge in Italy, which at once became the most civilized nation in Europe. Poetry, philosophy, and art thence found their way to France, England, and Germany, being greatly assisted by the invention of printing, which just then was beginning to make books cheaper than they ever had been. At the same time feudalism was ruined, because the invention of gunpowder had previously been changing the art of war. For example, the King of France, Louis XI, as well as the King of England, Henry VII, had entire disposal of the national artillery; and therefore overawed the barons and armored knights. Neither moated fortresses nor mail-clad warriors, nor archers with bows and arrows, could prevail against powder and shot. The middle ages had come to an end; modern Europe was being born. France had become concentrated by the union of the south to the north on the conclusion of the "Hundred Years' War," the final expulsion of the English, and the abolition of all the great feudatories of the kingdom. England, at the same time, had entirely swept away the rule of the barons by the recent "Wars of the Roses," and Henry had

strengthened his position by alliance with France, Spain, and Scotland. Spain, by the expulsion of the Moors from Granada in A. D. 1492, was for the first time concentrated into one great state by the union of Isabella's Kingdom of Castile-Leon to Ferdinand's Kingdom of Aragon-Sicily.

From the importance of the word *renaissance* as indicating the "movement of transition from the medieval to the modern world," Matthew Arnold gave it the English form "renascence"—adopted by J. R. Green, Coleridge, and others. In Germany, this great revival of letters and learning was contemporaneous with the Reformation, which had long been preparing (e. g., in England since John Wyclif) and was specially assisted by the invention of printing, which we have just mentioned. The minds of men everywhere were expanded: "whatever works of history, science, morality, or entertainment seemed likely to instruct or amuse were printed and distributed among the people at large by printers and booksellers."

Thus it was that, though the Turks never had any pretension to learning or culture, yet their action in the middle of the fifteenth century indirectly caused a marvelous tide of civilization to overflow all the western countries of Europe. Another result in the same age was the increase of navigation and exploration—the discovery of the world as well as of man. When the Turks became masters of the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, the European merchants were prevented from going to India and the East by the overland route, as had been done for generations. Thus, since geography was at this very

time improved by the science of Copernicus and others, the natural inquiry was how to reach India by sea instead of going overland. Columbus, therefore, sailed due west to reach Asia, and stumbled upon a "New World" without knowing what he did; then Cabot, sailing from Bristol, sailed northwest to reach India, and stumbled upon the continent of America; and during the same reign (Henry VII) the Atlantic coast of both North and South America was visited by English, Portuguese, or Spanish navigators. The third expedition to reach India by sea was under De Gama. He set out in the same year as Cabot, sailing into the South Atlantic, and ultimately did find the west coast of India at Calicut, after rounding the cape.

The mere enumeration of so many events, all of first-rate importance, proves that that half century (say from A. D. 1460 to 1520) must be called "an age of marvels," *sæclum mirabile*. The concurrence of so many epoch-making results gave a great impulse, not only to the study of literature, science, and art, but to the exploration of many unknown countries in America, Africa, and Asia, and the universal expansion of human knowledge generally.

I.—We shall now consider the first of these discoverers, who was also the greatest.

COLUMBUS, the Latinized form of the Italian Colombo, Spanish, Colon. This Genoese navigator must throughout all history be called the discoverer of America, notwithstanding all the work of smaller men. From his study of geographical books in several languages, Columbus had convinced himself that our planet is spherical

or ball-shaped, not a flat, plane surface. Till then India had always been reached by traveling overland toward the rising sun. Why not sail westward from Europe over the ocean, and thus come to the eastern parts of Asia by traveling toward the setting sun? By doing so, since our world is ball-shaped, said Columbus, we must inevitably reach Zipango (i. e., "Japan") and Cathay (i. e., "China"), which are the most eastern parts of Asia. India then will be a mere detail. Judging from the accounts of Asia and its eastern islands given by Marco Polo, a Venetian, as well as from the maps sketched by Ptolemy, the Egyptian geographer, Columbus believed that the east coast of Asia was not so very far from the west coast of Europe. Columbus was confirmed in this opinion by a learned geographer of Florence, named Paul, and henceforward impatiently waited for an opportunity of testing the truth of his theory.

He convinced himself, but could not convince any one else, that a westerly route to India was quite feasible. First he laid his plans before the authorities at Genoa, who had for generations traded with Asia by the overland journey, and ought therefore to have been glad to learn of this new alternative route, since the Turks were now playing havoc with the other; but no, they told Columbus that his idea was chimerical! Next he applied to the court of France. "Ridiculous!" was the reply, accompanied with a polite sneer. Next Columbus sent his scheme to Henry VII of England, a prince full of projects, but miserly. "Too expensive!" was the Tudor's reply, though presently, after the Spanish success, he became eager to despatch expeditions from Bristol under the

Cabots. Then Columbus, by the advice of his brother, who had settled in Lisbon as a map-maker, approached King John, seeking patronage and assistance, pleading the foremost position of Portugal among the maritime states. The Portuguese neglected the golden opportunity, ocean navigation not being in their way as yet, their skippers preferred "to hug the African shore."

At last Columbus gained the ear of Isabella, Queen of Castile; she believed in him and tried to get the assistance of her husband, Ferdinand, King of Aragon, in providing an outfit for the great expedition. Owing to Ferdinand's war in expelling the Moors from Granada, Columbus had still to wait several years.

In a previous year, 1477, Columbus had sailed to the North Atlantic, perhaps in one of those Basque whalers already referred to, going "a hundred leagues beyond Thule." If that means Iceland, as is generally supposed, it seems most probable that, when conversing with the sailors there he must have heard how Leif, with his Norsemen, had discovered the American coasts of Newfoundland and Vinland some five centuries earlier, and how they had settled a colony on the new continent. Other writers have pointed out that Columbus could very well have heard of Vinland and the Northmen before leaving Genoa, since one of the Popes had sanctioned the appointment of a bishop over the new diocese. If so, the visit of Columbus to Iceland probably gave him confirmation as to the Norse discovery of the American continent.

When at last King Ferdinand had taken Granada from the Moors, Columbus was put in com-

mand of three ships, with 120 men. He set sail from the port of Palos, in Andalusia, on a Friday, August 3, 1492, first steering to the Canary Islands, and then standing due west. In September, to the amazement of all on board, the compass was seen to "vary": an important scientific discovery – viz., that the magnetic needle does not always point to the pole-star. Some writers have imagined that the compass was for the first time utilized for a long journey by Columbus, but the occult power of the magnetic needle or "lodestone" had been known for ages before the fifteenth century. The ancient Persians and other "wise men of the East" used the lodestone as a talisman. Both the Mongolian and Caucasian races used it as an infallible guide in traveling across the mighty plains of Asia. The Cynosure in the Great Bear was the "guiding star," whether by sea or land; but when the heavens were wrapped in clouds, the magic stone or needle served to point exactly the position of the unseen star. What Columbus and his terrified crews discovered was the "variation of the compass," due to the fact that the magnetic needle points, not to the North Star, but to the "magnetic pole," a point in Canada to the west of Baffin's Bay and north of Hudson Bay.

If Columbus had continued steering due west he would have landed on the continent of America in Florida; but before sighting that coast the course was changed to southwest, because some birds were seen flying in that direction. The first land reached was an island of the Bahama group, which he named *San Salvador*. As the Spanish boats rowed to shore they were welcomed by

crowds of astonished natives, mostly naked, unless for a girdle of wrought cotton or plaited feathers. Hence the lines of Milton:

> Such of late
> Columbus found the American, so girt
> With feathered cincture, naked else and wild,
> Among the trees on isles and woody shores.

The spot of landing was formerly identified by Washington Irving and Baron Humboldt with "Cat Island"; but from the latest investigation it is now believed to have been Watling's Island. Here he landed on a Friday, October 12, 1492.

So little was then known of the geography of the Atlantic or of true longitude, that Columbus attributed these islands to the *east coast of Asia*. He therefore named them "Indian Islands," as if close to Hindustan, a blunder that has now been perpetuated for four hundred and ten years. The natives were called "Indians" for the same reasons. As the knowledge of geography advanced it became necessary to say "West Indies" or "East Indies" respectively, to distinguish American from Asiatic—"Indian corn" means American, but "Indian ink" means Asiatic, etc. Even after his fourth and last voyage Columbus believed that the continent, as well as the islands, was a portion of eastern Asia, and he died in that belief, without any suspicion of having discovered a New World.

A curious confirmation of the opinion of Columbus has just been discovered (1894) in the Florence Library, by Dr. Wieser, of Innsbruck. It is the actual copy of a map by the Great Admiral, drawn roughly in a letter written from

Jamaica, July, 1503. It shows that his belief as to the part of the world reached in his voyages was that it was the east coast of Asia.

The chief discovery made by Columbus in his first voyage was the great island of Cuba, which he imagined to be part of a continent. Some of the Spaniards went inland for sixty miles and reported that they had reached a village of more than a thousand inhabitants, and that the corn used for food was called *maize*—probably the first instance of Europeans using a term which was afterward to become as familiar as "wheat" or "barley." The natives told Columbus that their gold ornaments came from *Cubakan*, meaning the interior of Cuba; but he, on hearing the syllable *kan*, immediately thought of the "Khan" mentioned by Marco Polo, and therefore imagined that "Cathay" (the China of that famous traveler) was close at hand. The simple-minded Cubans were amazed that the Spaniards had such a love for gold, and pointed eastward to another island, which they called *Hayti*, saying it was more plentiful there than in Cuba. Thus Columbus discovered the second in size of all the West Indian islands, Cuba being the first; he, after landing on it, called it "Hispaniola," or Little Spain. Hayti in a few years became the headquarters of the Spanish establishments in the New World, after its capital, San Domingo, had been built by Bartholomew Columbus. It was in this island that the Spaniards saw the first of the "caziques," or native princes, afterward so familiar during the conquest of Mexico; he was carried on the shoulders of four men, and courteously presented Columbus with some plates of

gold. In a letter to the monarchs of Spain the admiral thus refers to the natives of Hayti:

> The people are so affectionate, so tractable, and so peaceable that I swear to your Highnesses there is not a better race of men, nor a better country in the world; . . . their conversation is the sweetest and mildest in the world, and always accompanied with a smile. The king is served with great state, and his behavior is so decent that it is pleasant to see him.

The admiral had previously described the Indians of Cuba as equally simple and friendly, telling how they had "honored the strangers as sacred beings allied to heaven." The pity of it, and the shame, is that those frank, unsuspicious, islanders had no notion or foresight of the cruel desolation which their gallant guests were presently to bring upon the native races—death, and torture, and extermination!

A harbor in Cuba is thus described by Columbus in a letter to Ferdinand and Isabella:

> I discovered a river which a galley might easily enter. . . . I found from five to eight fathoms of water. Having proceeded a considerable way up the river, everything invited me to settle there. The beauty of the river, the clearness of the water, the multitude of palm-trees and an infinite number of other large and flourishing trees, the birds and the verdure of the plains, . . . I am so much amazed at the sight of such beauty, that I know not how to describe it.

Having lost his flag-ship, Columbus returned to Spain with the two small caravels that remained from his petty fleet of three, arriving in the port of Palos March 15, 1493. The reception of the

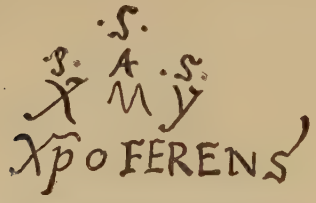
successful explorer was a national event. He entered Barcelona to be presented at court with every circumstance of honor and triumph. Sitting in presence of the king and queen he related his wondrous tale, while his attendants showed the gold, the cotton, the parrots and other unknown birds, the curious arms and plants, and above all the nine "Indians" with their outlandish trappings—brought to be made Christians by baptism. Ferdinand and Isabella heaped honors upon the successful navigator; and in return he promised them the untold riches of Zipango and Cathay. A new fleet, larger and better equipped, was soon found for a second voyage.

With his new ships, in 1498, Columbus again stood due west from the Canaries; and at last discovering an island with three mountain summits he named it Trinidad (i. e., "Trinity") without knowing that he was then coasting the great continent of South America. A few days later he and the crew were amazed by a tumult of waves caused by the fresh water of a great river meeting the sea. It was the "Oronooko," afterward called Orinoco; and from its volume Columbus and his shipmates concluded that it must drain part of a continent or a very large island.

> Where Orinoco in his pride,
> Rolls to the main no tribute tide,
> But 'gainst broad ocean urges far
> A rival sea of roaring war;
> While in ten thousand eddies driven
> The billows fling their foam to heaven,
> And the pale pilot seeks in vain,
> Where rolls the river, where the main.

That was the first glimpse which they had of America proper, still imagining it was only a part of eastern Asia. In the following voyage, his last, Columbus coasted part of the Isthmus of Darien. It was not, however, explored till the visit of Balboa.

It was during his third voyage that the "Great Admiral" suffered the indignity at San Domingo of being thrown into chains and sent back to Spain. This was done by Bobadilla, an officer of the royal household, who had been sent out



Cipher autograph of Columbus.

The interpretation of the cipher is probably:
SERVATF Christus Maria Yosephus (Christoferens).

with full power to put down misrule. The monarchs of Spain set Columbus free; and soon afterward he was provided with four ships for his fourth voyage. Stormy weather wrecked this final expedition, and at last he was glad to arrive in Spain, November 7, 1504. He now felt that his work on earth was done, and died at Valladolid, May 20, 1506. After temporary interment there his body was transferred to the cathedral of San Domingo—whence, 1796, some remains were removed with imposing ceremonies to Ha-

vana. From later investigations it appears that the ashes of the Genoese discoverer are still in the tomb of San Domingo.

It was in the cathedral of Seville, over his first tomb, that King Ferdinand is said to have honored the memory of the Great Admiral with a marble monument bearing the well-known epitaph:

A CASTILLA Y ARAGON

NUEVO MUNDO DIO **COLON.**

or, *"To the united Kingdom of Castile-Aragon Columbus gave a New World."*

After the death of Columbus, it seemed as if fate intended his family to enjoy the honors and rewards of which he had been so unjustly deprived. His son, Diego, wasted two years trying to obtain from King Ferdinand the offices of viceroy and admiral, which he had a right to claim in accordance with the arrangement formerly made with his father. At last Diego began a suit against Ferdinand before the council which managed Indian affairs. That court decided in favor of Diego's claim; and as he soon greatly improved his social position by marrying the niece of the Duke of Alva, a high nobleman, Diego received the appointment of governor (not viceroy), and went to Hayti, attended by his brother and uncles, as well as his wife and a large retinue. There Diego Columbus and his family lived, "with a splendor hitherto unknown in the New World."

II.—Henry VII of England, after repenting that he had not secured the services of Columbus, commissioned John Cabot to sail from Bristol across the Atlantic in a northwesterly direction, with the hope of finding some passage thereabouts to India. In June, 1497, a new coast was sighted (probably Labrador or Newfoundland), and named *Prima Vista*. They coasted the continent southward, "ever with intent to find the passage to India," till they reached the peninsula now called Florida. On this important voyage was based the claim which the English kings afterward made for the possession of all the Atlantic coast of North America. King Henry wished colonists to settle in the new land, *tam viri quam feminæ*, but since, in his usual miserly character, he refused to give a single "testoon," or "groat" toward the enterprise, no colonies were formed till the days of Walter Raleigh, more than a century later.

Sebastian Cabot, born in Bristol, 1477, was more renowned as a navigator than his father, John, and almost ranks with Columbus. After discovering Labrador or Newfoundland with his father, he sailed a second time with 300 men to form colonies, passing apparently into Hudson Bay. He wished to discover a channel leading to Hindustan, but the difficulties of icebergs and cold weather so frightened his crews that he was compelled to retrace his course. In another attempt at the northwest passage to Asia, he reached latitude 67½° north, and "gave English names to sundry places in Hudson Bay." In 1526, when commanding a Spanish expedition from Seville, he sailed to Brazil, which had al-

ready been annexed to Portugal by Cabrera, explored the River La Plata and ascended part of the Paraguay, returning to Spain in 1531. After his return to England, King Edward VI had some interviews with Cabot, one topic being the "variation of the compass." He received a royal pension of 250 marks, and did special work in relation to trade and navigation. The great honor of Cabot is that he saw the American continent before Columbus or Amerigo Vespucci.

III.—Of the great navigators of that unexampled age of discovery, as Spain was honored by Columbus and England by Cabot, so Portugal was honored by De Gama. Vasco de Gama, the greatest of Portuguese navigators, left Lisbon in 1497 to explore the unknown world lying east of the Cape of Good Hope, arriving at Calicut, May, 1498. Before that, Diaz had actually rounded the cape, but seems to have done so merely before a high gale. He named it "the stormy Cape." Cabrera, or Cabral, was another great explorer sent from Portugal to follow in the route of De Gama; but being forced into a southwesterly route by currents in the south Atlantic, he landed on the continent of America, and annexed the new country to Portugal under the name of Brazil. Cabrera afterward drew up the first commercial treaty between Portugal and India.

IV.—Magellan, scarcely inferior to Columbus, brought honor as a navigator both to Portugal and Spain. For the latter country, when in the service of Charles V, he revived the idea of Columbus that we may sail to Asia or the Spice Islands by sailing *west*. With a squadron of five ships, 236 men, he sailed, in 1519, to Brazil and

convinced himself that the great estuary was not a strait. Sailing south along the American coast, he discovered the strait that bears his name, and through it entered the Pacific, then first sailed upon by Europeans, though already seen by Balboa and his men "upon a peak in Darien"—as Keats puts it in his famous sonnet.* From the continuous fine weather enjoyed for some months, Magellan naturally named the new sea "the Pacific." After touching at the Ladrones and the Philippines, Magellan was killed in a fight with the inhabitants of Matan, a small island. Sebastian, his Basque lieutenant (mentioned in Chapter I) then successfully completed the circumnavigation of the world, sailing first to the Moluccas and thence to Spain.

V.—Of all the world-famous navigators contemporary with Colon, the Genoese, there remains only one deserving of our notice, and that because his name is for all time perpetuated in that of the New World. Amerigo (Latin *Americus*) Vespucci, born at Florence, 1451, had commercial occupation in Cadiz, and was employed by the Spanish Government. He has been charged with a fraudulent attempt to usurp the honor due to Columbus, but Humboldt and others have defended him, after a minute examination of the evidence. In a book published in 1507 by a German, *Waldseemüller*, the author happens to say:

> And the fourth part of the world having been discovered by Americus, it may be called Amerige, that is the land of Americus, or *America*.

* The poet, however, makes the clerical blunder of writing Cortez for Balboa.

Vespucci never called himself the discoverer of the new continent; as a mere subordinate he could not think of such a thing. As a matter of fact, he and Columbus were always on friendly terms, attached, and trusted. Humboldt explains the blunder of Waldseemüller and others by the general ignorance of the history of how America was discovered, since for some years it was jealously guarded as a "state secret." Humboldt curiously adds that the "musical sound of the name caught the public ear," and thus the blunder has been universally perpetuated:

statque stabilque
in omne volubilis ævum.

Another reason for the universal renown of Amerigo was that his book was the first that told of the new "Western World"; and was therefore eagerly read in all parts of Europe.

Cuba, though the largest of the West Indian islands, and second to be discovered, was not colonized till after the death of Columbus. Thus for more than three centuries and a half, as "Queen of the Antilles" and "Pearl of the Antilles," Cuba has been noted as a chief colonial possession of Spain, till recent events brought it under the power of the United States. The conquest of the island was undertaken by Velasquez, who, after accompanying the great admiral in his second voyage, had settled in Hispaniola (or Hayti) and acquired a large fortune there. He had little difficulty in the annexation of Cuba, because the natives, like those of Hispaniola, were of a peaceful character, easily imposed upon by the invaders. The only difficulty Velasquez had

was in the eastern part of the island, where Hatuey, a cazique or native chief, who had fled there from Hispaniola, made preparations to resist the Spaniards. When defeated, he was cruelly condemned by Velasquez to be burned to death, as a "slave who had taken arms against his master." The scene at Hatuey's execution is well known:

> When fastened to the stake, a Franciscan friar promised him immediate admittance into the joys of heaven, if he would embrace the Christian faith. "Are there any Spaniards," says he, after some pause, "in that region of bliss which you describe?" "Yes," replied the monk, "but only such as are worthy and good." "The best of them have neither worth nor goodness: I will not go to a place where I may meet with one of that accursed race."

Being thus annexed in 1511, by the middle of the century all the native Indians of Cuba had become extinct. In the following century this large and fertile island suffered severely by the buccaneers, but during the eighteenth century it prospered. During the nineteenth century, the United States Government had often been urged to obtain possession of it; for example, the sum of one hundred million dollars was offered in 1848 by President Polk. Slavery was at last abolished absolutely in 1886. In recent years Spain, by ceding Cuba and the Philippines to the United States and the Carolines to Germany, has brought her colonial history to a close.

Two other important events occurred when Velasquez was Governor of Cuba: first, the escape of Balboa from Hispaniola, to become afterward Governor of Darien; and, second, the expe-

dition under Cordova to explore that part of the continent of America which lies nearest to Cuba. This expedition of 110 men, in three small ships, led to the discovery of that large peninsula now known as Yucatan. Cordova imagined it to be an island. The natives were not naked, like those of the West Indian islands, but wore cotton clothes, and some had ornaments of gold. In the towns, which contained large stone houses, and country generally, there were many proofs of a somewhat advanced civilization. The natives, however, were much more warlike than the simple islanders of Cuba and Hispaniola; and Cordova, in fact, was glad to return from Yucatan.

Velasquez, on hearing the report of Cordova, at once fitted out four vessels to explore the newly discovered country, and despatched them under command of his nephew, Grijalva. Everywhere were found proofs of civilization, especially in architecture. The whole district, in fact, abounds in prehistoric remains. From a friendly chief Grijalva received a sort of coat of mail covered with gold plates; and on meeting the ruler of the province he exchanged some toys and trinkets, such as glass beads, pins, scissors, for a rich treasure of jewels, gold ornaments and vessels.

Grijalva was therefore the first European to step on the Aztec soil and open an intercourse with the natives. Velasquez, the Governor, at once prepared a larger expedition, choosing as leader or commander an officer who was destined henceforth to fill a much larger place in history than himself, one who presently appeared capable of becoming a general in the foremost rank, Hernando Cortés, greatest of all Spanish explorers.

CHAPTER III

THE EXTINCT CIVILIZATION OF THE AZTECS

In the Extinct Civilizations of the East it was shown that the cosmogony of the Chaldeans closely resembles that of the Hebrews and the Phenicians, and that the account of the deluge in Genesis exactly reproduces the much earlier one found on one of the Babylonian tablets.

Traces of a deluge legend also existed among the early Aztecs. They believed

> that two persons survived the Deluge, a man named Koksoz and his wife. Their heads are represented in ancient paintings together with a boat floating on the waters at the foot of a mountain. A dove is also depicted, with a hieroglyphical emblem of languages in his mouth. . . . Tezpi, the Noah of a neighboring people, also escaped in a boat, which was filled with various kinds of animals and birds. After some time a vulture was sent out from it, but remained feeding on the dead bodies of the giants, which had been left on the earth as the waters subsided. The little humming-bird was then sent forth and returned with the branch of a tree in its mouth.

Another Aztec tradition of the deluge is that the pyramidal mound, the temple of Cholula (a sacred city on the way between the capital and the seaport), was built by the giants to escape drowning. Like the tower of Babel, it was intended to reach the clouds, till the gods looked down and, by destroying the pyramid by fires from heaven, compelled the builders to abandon the attempt.

The hieroglyphics used in the Aztec calendar correspond curiously with the zodiacal signs of the Mongols of eastern Asia. "The symbols in the Mongolian calendar are borrowed from animals, and four of the twelve are the same as the Aztec."

The antiquity of most of the monuments is proved—e. g., by the growth of trees in the midst of the buildings in Yucatan. Many have had time to attain a diameter of from six to nine feet. In a courtyard at Uxmal, the figures of tortoises sculptured in relief upon the granite pavement are so worn away by the feet of countless generations of the natives that the design of the artist is scarcely recognizable.

The Spanish invaders demolished every vestige of the Aztec religious monuments, just as Roman Catholic images and paraphernalia were once treated by the "straitest sects" of Protestants, or even Mohammedans.

The beautiful plateau around the lakes of Mexico, as well as other central portions of America, were without any doubt occupied from the earliest ages by peoples who gradually advanced in civilization from generation to generation and passed through cycles of revolutions—in one century relapsing, in another advancing by leaps and bounds by an infusion of new blood or a change of environment—exactly similar to the checkered annals of the successive dynasties in the Nile Valley and the plains of Babylonia. In the New World, as in the Old World, from prehistoric times wealth was accumulated at such centers, bringing additional comfort and refinement, and implying the practise of the useful arts

and some applications of science. As to the legendary migrations or even those extinct races whose names still remain, Max Müller said: *

> The traditions are no better than the Greek traditions about Pelasgians, Æolians, and Ionians, and it would be a mere waste of time to construct out of such elements a systematic history, only to be destroyed again sooner or later, by some Niebuhr, Grote, or Lewis.

Anahuac (i. e., "waterside" or "the lake-country"), in the early centuries of our era, was a name of the country round the lakes and town afterward called Mexico. To this center, as a place for settlement, there came from the north or northwest a succession of tribes more or less allied in race and language—especially (according to one theory) the *Toltecs* from Tula, and the *Aztecs* from Aztlan. Tula, north of the Mexican Valley, had been the first capital of the Toltecs, and at the time of the Spanish conquest there were remains of large buildings there. Most of the extensive temples and other edifices found throughout "New Spain" were attributed to this race and the word "toltek" became synonymous with "architect."

Some five centuries after the Toltecs had abandoned Tula, the Aztecs or early Mexicans arrived to settle in the Valley of Anahuac. With the Aztecs came the Tezcucans, whose capital, Tezcuco, on the eastern border of the Mexican lake, has given it its still surviving name.

The Aztecs, again, after long migrations from place to place, finally, in A. D. 1325, halted on the

* Chips from a German Workshop, i, 327.

southwestern shores of the great lake. According to tradition, a heavenly vision thus announced the site of their future capital:

> They beheld perched on the stem of a prickly-pear, which shot out from the crevice of a rock washed by the waves, a royal eagle of extraordinary size and beauty, with a serpent in its talons, and its broad wings opened to the rising sun. They hailed the auspicious omen, announced by an oracle as indicating the sight of their future city, and laid its foundations by sinking piles into the shallows; for the low marshes were half buried under water. . . . The place was called Tenochtitlan (i. e. "the cactus on a rock") in token of its miraculous origin. [Such were the humble beginnings of the Venice of the Western World.] *

To this day the arms of the Mexican republic show the device of the eagle and the cactus—to commemorate the legend of the foundation of the capital—afterward called Mexico from the name of their war-god. Fiercer and more warlike than their brethren of Tezcuco, the men of the latter town were glad of their assistance, when invaded and defeated by a hostile tribe. Thus Mexico and Tezcuco became close allies, and by the time of Montezuma I, in the middle of the fifteenth century, their sovereignty had extended beyond their native plateau to the coast country along the Gulf of Mexico. The capital rapidly increased in population, the original houses being replaced by substantial stone buildings. There are documents showing that Tenochtitlan was of much larger dimensions than the modern capital of Mexico, on the same site. Just before the arrival of the Spaniards, at the beginning of the sixteenth century,

* Prescott, i, 1, pp. 8, 9.

the kingdom extended from the gulf across to the Pacific; and southward under the ruthless Ahuitzotl over the whole of Guatemala and Nicaragua.

The Aztecs resembled the ancient Peruvians in very few respects, one being the use of knots on strings of different colors to record events and numbers. Compare our account of "the quipu" in Chapter X. The Aztecs seem to have replaced that rude method of making memoranda during the seventh century by picture-writing. Before the Spanish invasion, thousands of native clerks or chroniclers were employed in painting on vegetable paper and canvas. Examples of such manuscripts may still be seen in all the great museums. Their contents chiefly refer to ritual, astrology, the calendar, annals of the kings, etc.

Most of the literary productions of the ancient Mexicans were stupidly destroyed by the Spanish under Cortés. The first Archbishop of Mexico founded a professorship in 1553 for expounding the hieroglyphs of the Aztecs, but in the following century the study was abandoned. Even the native-born scholars confessed that they were unable to decipher the ancient writing. One of the most ancient books (assigned to Tula, the "Toltec" capital, A. D. 660, and written by Huetmatzin, an astrologer), describes the heavens and the earth, the stars in their constellations, the arrangement of time in the official calendar, with some geography, mythology, and cosmogony. In the fifteenth century the King of Tezcuco published sixty hymns in honor of the Supreme Being, with an elegy on the destruction of a town, and another on the instability of human greatness.

In the same century the three Anahuac states

(Acolhua, Mexico, and Tlacopan) formed a confederacy with a constant tendency to give Mexico the supremacy. The two capitals looking at each other across the lake were steadily growing in importance, with all the adjuncts of public works —causeways, canals, aqueducts, temples, palaces, gardens, and other evidences of wealth.

The horror and disgust caused by the Aztec sacrificial bloodshed are greatly increased by considering the number of the victims. The kings actually made war in order to provide as many victims as possible for the public sacrifices—especially on such an occasion as a coronation or the consecration of a new temple. Captives were sometimes reserved a considerable time for the purpose of immolation. It was the regular method of the Aztec warrior in battle not to kill one's opponent if he could be made a captive; to take him alive was a meritorious act in religion. In fact, the Spaniards in this way frequently escaped death at the hands of their Mexican opponents. When King Montezuma was asked by a European general why he had permitted the republic of Tlascala to remain independent on the borders of his kingdom, his reply was, "That she might furnish me with victims for my gods."

In reckoning the number of victims Prescott seems to have trusted too implicitly to the almost incredible accounts of the Spanish. Zumurraga, the first Bishop of Mexico, asserts that 20,000 were sacrificed annually, but Casas points out that with such a "waste of the human species," as is implied in some histories, the country could not have been so populous as Cortés found it. The estimate of Casas is "that the Mexicans never sacri-

ficed more than fifty or a hundred persons in a year."

Notwithstanding the wholesale bloodshed before the shrines of their gory gods, we can still assign to the Aztecs a high degree of civilization. The history of even modern Europe will illustrate this statement, although apparently paradoxical.

Consider "the condition of some of the most polished countries in the sixteenth century after the establishment of the modern Inquisition—an institution which yearly destroyed its thousands by a death more painful than the Aztec sacrifices, . . . which did more to stay the march of improvement than any other scheme ever devised by human cunning. . . . Human sacrifice was sometimes voluntarily embraced by the Aztecs as the most glorious death, and one that opened a sure passage into paradise. The Inquisition, on the other hand, branded its victims with infamy in this world, and consigned them to everlasting perdition in the next."

The difficulty with the Aztecs is how to reconcile such refinement as their extinct civilization showed with their savage enjoyment of bloodshed. "No captive was ever ransomed or spared; all were sacrificed without mercy, and their flesh devoured." The first of the four chief counselors of the empire was called the "Prince of the Deadly Lance," the second "Divider of Men," the third "Shedder of Blood," the fourth "the Lord of the Dark House."

The temples were very numerous, generally merely pyramidal masses of clay faced with brick or stone. The roof was a broad area on which stood one or two towers, from forty to fifty feet in

height, forming the sanctuaries of the presiding deities, and therefore containing their images. Before these sanctuaries stood the dreadful stone of sacrifice. There were also two altars with sacred fires kept ever burning.

All the religious services were public, and the pyramidal temples, with stairs round their massive sides, allowed the long procession of priests to be visible as they ceremoniously ascended to perform the dread office of slaughtering the human victims.

Human sacrifices had not originally been a feature of the Aztec worship. But about 200 years before the arrival of the Spanish invaders was the beginning of this religious atrocity, and at last no public festival was considered complete without some human bloodshed.

Prescott takes as an example the great festival in honor of Tezcatlipoca, a handsome god of the second rank, called "the soul of the world," and endowed with perpetual youth.

A year before the intended sacrifice, a captive, distinguished for his personal beauty and without a blemish on his body, was selected. . . . Tutors took charge of him and instructed him how to perform his new part with becoming grace and dignity. He was arrayed in a splendid dress, regaled with incense and with a profusion of sweet-scented flowers. . . . When he went abroad he was attended by a train of the royal pages, and as he halted in the streets to play some favorite melody, the crowd prostrated themselves before him, and did him homage as the representative of their good deity. . . . Four beautiful girls, bearing the names of the principal goddesses, were selected, and with them he continued to live idly, feasted at the banquets of the principal nobles, who paid him all the

honors of a divinity. When at length the fatal day of sacrifice arrived, . . . stripped of his gaudy apparel, one of the royal barges transported him across a lake to a temple which rose on its margin. . . . Hither the inhabitants of the capital flocked to witness the consummation of the ceremony. As the sad procession wound up the sides of the pyramid, the unhappy victim threw away his gay chaplets of flowers and broke in pieces his musical instruments. . . . On the summit he was received by six priests, whose long and matted locks flowed in disorder over their sable robes, covered with hierolgyphic scrolls of mystic import. They led him to the sacrificial stone, a huge block of jasper, with its upper surface somewhat convex. On this the victim was stretched. Five priests secured his head and limbs, while the sixth, clad in a scarlet mantle, emblematic of his bloody office, dexterously opened the breast of the wretched victim with a sharp razor of *itzli*, and inserting his hand in the wound, tore out the palpitating heart, and after holding it up to the sun (as representing the supreme God), cast it at the feet of the deity to whom the temple was devoted, while the multitudes below prostrated themselves in humble adoration.

Such was an instance of the human sacrifices for which ancient Mexico became infamous to the whole civilized world.

One instance of a sacrifice differing from the ordinary sort is thus given by a Spanish historian:

A captive of distinction was sometimes furnished with arms for single combat against a number of Mexicans in succession. If he defeated them all, as did occasionally happen, he was allowed to escape. If vanquished he was dragged to the block and sacrificed in the usual manner. The combat was fought on a huge circular stone before the population of the capital.

Women captives were occasionally sacrificed before those bloodthirsty gods, and in a season of

drought even children were sometimes slaughtered to propitiate Tlaloc, the god of rain.

Borne along in open litters, dressed in their festal robes and decked with the fresh blossoms of spring, they moved the hardest hearts to pity, though their cries were drowned in the wild chant of the priests who read in their tears a favorable augury for the rain prayer.

One Spanish historian informs us that these innocent victims of this repulsive religion were generally bought by the priests from parents who were poor.

We may now resume the traditional setttlement of the ancient Mexicans on the region called Anahuac, including all the fertile plateau and extending south to the lake of Nicaragua. The chief tribes of the race were said to have come from California, and after being subject to the Colhua people asserted their independence about A. D. 1325. Soon afterward, their first capital, Tenochtitlan, was built on the site of Mexico, their permanent center. For several generations they lived, like their remote ancestors, the Red Men of the Woods, as hunters, fishers, and trappers, but at last their prince or chief cazique was powerful enough to be called king. The rule of this Aztec prince, beginning A. D. 1440, marked the beginning of their greatness as a race. It became a rule of their kingdom that every new king must gain a victory before being crowned; and thus by the conquest of a new nation furnish a supply of captives to gratify their tutelary deity by the necessary human sacrifices. In 1502 the younger Montezuma ascended the throne. He is better

known to us than the previous kings, because it was in his reign that the Spanish conquerors appeared on the scene. From the time of Cortés the history of the Aztecs becomes part of that of the Mexicans. They were easily conquered by the European troops, partly because of their betrayal by various of the neighboring nations whom they had formerly conquered. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, according to Prescott, the Aztec king ruled the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

From the scientific side of their extinct civilization it is their knowledge of astronomy that chiefly causes astonishment (see also p. 85). As in the case of the Chaldeans and Babylonians, a motive for the study of the stars and planets was the priestly one of accurately fixing the religious festivals. The tropical year being thus ascertained, their tables showed the exact time of the equinox or sun's transit across the equatorial, and of the solstice. From a very early period they had practised agriculture, growing Indian corn and "Mexican aloe." Having no animals of draft, such as the horse, or ox, their farming was naturally of a rude and imperfect sort.

"The degree of civilization," says Prescott, "which the Aztecs reached, as inferred by their political institutions, may be considered, perhaps, not much short of that enjoyed by our Saxon ancestors under Alfred."

In a passage comparing the Aztecs to the American Indians, we read:

> The latter has something peculiarly sensitive in his nature. He shrinks instinctively from the rude touch

of a foreign hand. Even when this foreign influence comes in the form of civilization he seems to sink and pine away beneath it. It has been so with the Mexicans. Under the Spanish domination their numbers have silently melted away. Their energies are broken. They no longer tread their mountain plains with the conscious independence of their ancestors. In their faltering step and meek and melancholy aspect we read the sad characters of the conquered race. . . . Their civilization was of the hardy character which belongs to the wilderness. The fierce virtues of the Aztec were all his own.

Humboldt found some analogy between the Aztec theory of the universe, as taught by the priests, and the Asiatic "cosmogonies." The Aztecs, in explaining the great mystery of man's existence after death, believed that future time would revolve in great periods or cycles, each embracing thousands of years. At the end of each of the four cycles of future time in the present world, "the human family will be swept from the earth by the agency of one of the elements, and the sun blotted out from the heavens to be again rekindled."

The priesthood comprised a large number who were skilled in astrology and divination. The great temple of Mexico, alone, had 5,000 priests in attendance, of whom the chief dignitaries superintended the dreadful rites of human sacrifice. Others had management of the singing choirs with their musical accompaniment of drums and other instruments; others arranged the public festivals according to the calendar, and had charge of the hieroglyphical word-painting and oral traditions. One important section of the priesthood were teachers, responsible for the edu-

cation of the children and instruction in religion and morality. The head management of the hierarchy or whole ecclesiastical system, was under two high priests—the more dignified that they were chosen by the king and principal nobles without reference to birth or social station. These high priests were consulted on any national emergency, and in precedency of rank were superior to every man except the king. Montezuma is said to have been a priest.

The priestly power was more absolute than any ever experienced in Europe. Two remarkable peculiarities were that when a sinner was pardoned by a priest, the certificate afterward saved the culprit from being legally punished for any offense; secondly, there could be no pardon for an offense once atoned for if the offense were repeated. "Long after the conquest, the simple natives when they came under the arm of the law, sought to escape by producing the certificate of their former confession." (Prescott, i, 33.)

The prayer of the priest-confessor, as reported by a Spanish historian, is very remarkable:

"O, merciful Lord, thou who knowest the secrets of all hearts, let thy forgiveness and favor descend, like the pure waters of heaven, to wash away the stains from the soul. Thou knowest that this poor man has sinned, *not from his own free will*, but from the influence of the sign under which he was born. . . .

After enjoining on the penitent a variety of minute ceremonies by way of penance, the confessor urges the necessity of instantly procuring a slave for sacrifice to the Deity.

In the schools under the clergy the boys were taught by priests and the girls by priestesses.

There was a higher school for instruction in tradition and history, the mysteries of hieroglyphs, the principles of government, and certain branches of astronomical and natural science.

In the education of their children the Mexican community were very strict, but from a letter preserved by one of the Spanish historians, we can not doubt the womanly affection of a mother who thus wrote to her daughter:

My beloved daughter, very dear little dove, you have already heard and attended to the words which your father has told you. They are precious words, which have proceeded from the bowels and heart in which they were treasured up; and your beloved father well knows that you, his daughter, begotten of him, are his blood and his flesh; and God our Lord knows that it is so. Although you are a woman, and are the image of your father, what more can I say to you than has already been said? . . . My dear daughter, whom I tenderly love, see that you live in the world in peace, tranquillity, and contentment—see that you disgrace not yourself, that you stain not your honor, nor pollute the luster and fame of your ancestors. . . . May God prosper you, my first-born, and may you come to God, who is in every place.*

Some trace of a "natural piety," which will probably surprise our readers, is also found in the ceremony of Aztec baptism, as described by the same writer. After the head and lips of the infant were touched with water and a name given to it, the goddess Cioacoatl was implored "that the sin which was given to us before the beginning of the world might not visit the child, but

* Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, vi, 19.

that, cleansed by these waters, it might live and be born anew." In Sahagun's account we read:

When all the relations of the child were assembled, the midwife, who was the person that performed the rite of baptism, was summoned. When the sun had risen, the midwife, taking the child in her arms, called for a little earthen vessel of water. . . . To perform the rite, she placed herself *with her face toward the west*, and began to go through certain ceremonies. . . . After this she sprinkled water on the head of the infant, saying, "O my child! receive the water of the Lord of the world, which is our life, and is given for the increasing and renewing of our body. It is to wash and to purify." . . . [After a prayer] she took the child in both hands, and lifting him toward heaven said, "O Lord, thou seest here thy creature whom thou hast sent into this world, this place of sorrow, suffering, and penitence. Grant him, O Lord, thy gifts and thine inspiration."

The science of the Aztecs has excited the wonder of all competent judges, such as Humboldt (already quoted) and the astronomer La Place. Lord Kingsborough remarks in his great work:

It can hardly be doubted that the Mexicans were acquainted with many scientifical instruments of strange invention; . . . whether the telescope may not have been of the number is uncertain; but the thirteenth plate of M. Dupaix's Monuments, which represents a man holding something of a similar nature to his eye, affords reason to suppose that they knew how to improve the powers of vision.

References to the calendar of the Aztecs should not omit the secular festival occurring at the end of their great cycle of fifty-two years. From the

length of the period, two generations, one might compare it with the "jubilee" of ancient Israel—a word made familiar toward the close of Queen Victoria's reign. The great event always took place at midwinter, the most dreary period of the year, and when the five intercalary days arrived they "abandoned themselves to despair," breaking up the images of the gods, allowing the holy fires of the temples to go out, lighting none in their homes, destroying their furniture and domestic utensils, and tearing their clothes to rags. This disorder and gloom signified that figuratively the end of the world was at hand.

On the evening of the last day, a procession of priests, assuming the dress and ornaments of their gods, moved from the capital toward a lofty mountain, about two leagues distant. They carried with them a noble victim, the flower of their captives, and an apparatus for kindling the *new fire*, the success of which was an augury of the renewal of the cycle. On the summit of the mountain, the procession paused till midnight, when, as the constellation of the Pleiades* approached the zenith, the new fire was kindled by the friction of some sticks placed on the breast of the victim. The flame was soon communicated to a funeral-pyre on which the body of the slaughtered captive was thrown. As the light streamed up toward heaven, shouts of joy and triumph burst forth from the countless multitudes who covered the hills, the terraces of the temples, and the housetops. . . . Couriers, with torches lighted at the blazing beacon, rapidly bore them over every part of the country. . . . A new cycle had commenced its march.

* A famous group of seven small stars in the Bull constellation. The "seven sisters" appear as only *six* to ordinary eyesight: to make out the seventh is a test of a practised eye and excellent vision.

The following thirteen days were given up to festivity. . . . The people, dressed in their gayest apparel, and crowned with garlands and chaplets of flowers, thronged in joyous procession to offer up their oblations and thanksgivings in the temples. Dances and games were instituted emblematical of the regeneration of the world.

Prescott compares this carnival of the Aztecs to the great secular festival of the Romans or ancient Etruscans, which (as Suetonius remarked) "few alive had witnessed before, or could expect to witness again." The *ludi sæculares* or secular games of Rome were held only at very long intervals and lasted for three days and nights.

The poet Southey thus refers to the ceremony of opening the new Aztec cycle, or Circle of the Years.

On his bare breast the cedar boughs are laid,
On his bare breast, dry sedge and odorous gums,
Laid ready to receive the sacred spark,
And blaze, to herald the ascending sun,
Upon his living altar. Round the wretch
The inhuman ministers of rites accurst
Stand, and expect the signal when to strike
The seed of fire. Their Chief, apart from all,
. . . eastward turns his eyes;
For now the hour draws nigh, and speedily
He looks to see the first faint dawn of day
Break through the orient sky.

Madoc, ii, 26.

CHAPTER IV

AMERICAN ARCHEOLOGY

Long before the time of Columbus and the Spanish conquest there existed on the table-land of Mexico two great races or nations, as has already been shown, both highly civilized, and both akin in language, art, and religion. Ethnologists and antiquaries are not agreed as to their origin or the development of their civilization. Many recent critics have held the theory that there had been a previous people from whom both races inherited their extinct civilization, this previous race being the "Toltecs," whom we have repeatedly mentioned in the preceding chapter. To that previous race some attribute the colossal stonework around Lake Titicaca, as well as other survivals of long-forgotten culture. Some would even class them with the "mound-builders" of the Ohio Valley. Other recent antiquaries, however, while fully admitting the Aztec-Tescucan civilization to be real and historical, treat the Toltec theory as partly or entirely mythical. One writer alleges, after the manner of Max Müller, that the Toltecs are "simply a personification of the rays of light" radiating from the Aztec sun-god.

Leaving abstract theories, we shall devote this chapter to the principal facts of American archeology—especially as regards the races and the monuments of their long extinct civilizations. Throughout many parts of both North and South

America, and over large areas, the red-skinned natives continued their generations as their ancestors had done through untold centuries, scarcely rising above the state of rude, uncultured sons of the soil living as hunters, trappers, fishers, as had been done immemorially

When wild in woods the noble savage ran,

as Dryden puts it. But in Mexico, Yucatan, and Central America, Colombia, and Peru there were men of the original redskin race who had distinctly attained to civilization for unknown generations before the time of Columbus. Not only so, but in many centers of wealth and population the process of social improvement and advance had been continuous for unrecorded ages; and in certain cases a long extinct civilization had overlaid a previous civilization still more remotely extinct. Some works constructed for supplying water, for example, could only have been applied to that purpose when the climate or geological conditions were quite different from what they have always been in historical times!

Who is the red man? Compared in numbers with the yellow man, the white man, or even the black, he is very unimportant, being only one-tenth as great as the African race.* In American ethnology, however, the red man is all-important. Primeval men of this race undoubtedly formed the original stock whence during the centuries were derived all the numerous tribes of "Indians"

* White or Caucasian 640,000,000, yellow or Mongolian 600,000,000, black or African 200,000,000, red or American 20,000,000.

found in either North or South America. Throughout Asia and Africa there is great diversity in type among the races that are indigenous; but as to America, to quote Humboldt:

> The Indians of New Spain [i. e., Mexico] bear a general resemblance to those who inhabit Canada, Florida, Peru, and Brazil. We have the same swarthy and copper color, straight and smooth hair, small beard, squat body, long eye, with the corner directed upward toward the temples, prominent cheek-bones, thick lips, and expression of gentleness in the mouth, strongly contrasted with a gloomy and severe look.

Whence the original red men of America were derived it is impossible to say. The date is too remote and the data too few. From fossil remains of human bones, Agassiz estimated a period of at least ten thousand years; and near New Orleans, beneath four buried forests, a skeleton was found which was possibly fifty thousand years old. If, therefore, the redskins branched off from the yellow man, it must have been at a period which lies utterly beyond historic ken or calculation.

Some recent ethnologists have borrowed the "glacier theory" from the science of geology, in order to trace the development of civilization among certain races. In Switzerland and Greenland the signs of the action of a glacier can be traced and recognized just as we trace the proofs of the action of water in a dry channel. Visit the front of a glacier in autumn after the summer heat has made it shrink back, you will see (1) rounded rocks, as if planed on the top, with (2) a mixed mass of stones and gravel like a rubbish-heap,

scattered on (3) a mass of clay and sand, containing boulders. The same three tests are frequently found in countries where there have been no glaciers within the memory of man.

Such traces, found not only in England, Scotland, and Ireland, but in northern Germany and Denmark, prove that the mountain mass of Scandinavia was the nucleus of a huge ice-cap "radiating to a distance of not less than 1,000 miles, and thick enough to block up with solid ice the North Sea, the German Ocean, the Baltic, and even the Atlantic up to the 100-fathom line." In North America the same thing is proved by similar evidence. A gigantic ice-cap extending from Canada has glaciated all the minor mountain ranges to the south, sweeping over the whole continent. The drift and boulders still remain to prove the fact, as far south as only 15° north of the tropic. A warm oceanic current, like the Gulf Stream of the Atlantic, would shorten a glacial period. Speaking of Scotland, one authority states that "if the Gulf Stream were diverted and the Highlands upheaved to the height of the New Zealand Alps, the whole country would again be buried under glaciers pushing out into the seas" on the west and east.

The theory is that as the climate became warmer, the ice-fronts retreated northward by the shrinking of the glaciers, and therefore the animals, including man, were able to live farther north. The men of that very remote period were "Neolithic," and some of the stone monuments are attributed to them that were formerly called "Druidic." A recent writer asks, with reference to Stonehenge:

Did Neolithic men slowly coming northward, as the rigors of the last glacial period abated, domicile here, and build this huge gaunt temple before they passed farther north, to degrade and dwindle down into Eskimos wandering the dismal coasts of arctic seas?

Another writer, with reference to the American ice-sheet, says:

During the second glacial epoch when the great boreal ice-sheet covered one-half of the North American continent, reaching as far south as the present cities of Philadelphia and St. Louis, and the glaciated portions were as unfit for human occupation as the snow-cap of Greenland is to-day, aggregations of population clustered around the equatorial zone, because the climatic conditions were congenial. And inasmuch as civilization, the world over, clings to the temperate climates and thrives there best, we are not surprised to learn that communities far advanced in arts and architecture built and occupied those great cities in Yucatan, Honduras, Guatemala, and other Central American states, whose populations once numbered hundreds of thousands.

An approximate date when this civilization was at the acme of its glory would be about ten thousand years ago. This is established by observations upon the recession of the existing glacier fronts, which are known to drop back twelve miles in one hundred years.

With the gradual withdrawal of the glacial ice-sheet the climate grew proportionately milder, and flora and fauna moved simultaneously northward. Some emigrants went to South America and settled there, carrying their customs, arts, ceremonial rites, hieroglyphs, architecture, etc.; and an immense exodus took place into Mexico, which ultimately extended westward up the Pacific coast.

In subsequent epochs when the ice-sheet had withdrawn from large areas, there were immense influxes of people from Asia via Bering Strait on the Pacific side, and from northwestern Europe via Greenland on the Atlantic side.

The Korean immigration of the year 544 led to the founding of the Mexican Empire in 1325.

To trace then the gradations of ascent from the native American — called "Indians" by a blunder of the Great Admiral, as afterward they were nicknamed "redskins" by the English settlers—to the Mexicans, Peruvians, or Colombians is a task far beyond our strength. Leaving the question of race, therefore, we now turn to the antiquarian remains, especially the architectural.

The prehistoric civilization which was developed to the south of Mexico is generally known as "Mayan," although the Mayas were undoubtedly akin to the Aztecs or early Mexicans. The Maya tribes in Yucatan and Honduras, from abundant evidence, must have risen to a refinement in prehistoric times, which, in several respects, was superior to that of the Aztecs. In architecture they were in advance from the earliest ages not only of the Aztec peoples, but of all the American races.

In Yucatan the Mayas have left some wonderful remains at Mayapan, their prehistoric capital, and near it at a place called Uxmal which has become famous from its vast and elaborate structures,* evidencing a knowledge of art and science which had flourished in this region for centuries before the arrival of the Spanish. The chief building in Uxmal is in pyramidal form, the principal design in the ancient Aztec temples (as well as those of Chaldea, etc.), consisting of three terraces faced with hewn stone. The terraces are in length 575, 545, and 360 feet respectively; with

* See Frontispiece.

the temple on the summit, 322 feet, and a great flight of stairs leading to it. The whole building is surrounded by a belt of richly sculptured figures, above a cornice. At Chichen, also in Yucatan, there is an area of two miles perimeter entirely covered with architectural ruins; many of the roofs having apparently consisted of stone arches, painted in various colors. One building, of peculiar construction, proves an enigma to all travelers: it is more than ninety yards long and consists of two parallel walls, each ten yards thick, the distance between them being also ten yards. It has been conjectured that the anomalous construction had reference to some public games by which the citizens amused themselves in that long-forgotten period. Among other memorials of Mayan architecture in this country is the city of Tuloom on the east coast, fortified with strong walls and square towers. A more remarkable "find" in the dense forests of Chiapas, in the same country, is the city recorded by Stephens and other travelers. It is near the coast, at the place where Cortés and his Spanish soldiers were moving about for a considerable time, yet they do not appear to have ever seen the splendid ruins, or to have at all suspected their existence. Even if the natives knew, the Spaniards might have found the toil of forcing a passage through such forests too laborious. The name of the city which had so long been buried under the tropical vegetation was quite unknown, nor was there any tradition of it; but when found it was called "Palenque," from the nearest inhabited village. There were substantial and handsome buildings with excellent masonry, and in many

cases beautiful sculptures and hieroglyphical figures.

Merida, the capital of Yucatan, is on the site of a prehistoric city whose name had also become unknown. When building the present town, the Spaniards utilized the ancient buildings as quarries for good stones.

The larger prehistoric structures are frequently on artificial mounds, being probably intended for religious or ceremonial purposes. The walls both within and without are elaborately decorated, sometimes with symbolic figures. Sometimes officials in ceremonial costumes are seen apparently performing religious rites. These are often accompanied by inscriptions in low relief, with the peculiar Mayan characters which some archeologists call "calculiform hieroglyphs" (*v.* p. 82).

On one of the altar-slabs near Palenque there occurs a sculptured group

of several figures in the act of making offerings to a central object shaped like the Latin cross. "The Latin, the Greek, and the Egyptian cross or *tau* (T) were evidently sacred symbols to this ancient people, bearing some religious meanings derived from their own cult."*

The cross occurs frequently, not only in the Mayan sculptures, but also in the ceremonial of the Aztecs. The Spanish followers of Cortés were astonished to see this symbol used by these "barbarians," as they called them. Winsor (i, 195) says that the Mayan cross has been explained to mean "the four cardinal points, the

* D. G. Brinton.

rain-bringers, the symbol of life and health"; and again, "the emblem of fire, indeed an ornamental fire-drill."

Students of architecture find a rudimentary form of the arch occurring in some of the ruins, notably at Palenque. Two walls are built parallel to each other, at some distance apart, then at the beginning of the arch the layers on both sides have the inner stones slightly projecting, each layer projecting a little more than the previous one, till at a certain height the stones of one wall are almost touching those of the wall opposite. Finally, a single flat stone closes in the space between and completes the arch.

In Honduras, on the banks of the Copan, the Spaniards found a prehistoric capital in ruins, on an elevated area, surrounded by substantial walls built of dressed stones, and enclosing large groups of buildings. One structure is mainly composed of huge blocks of polished stone. In several houses the whole of the external surface is covered with elaborate carved designs:

> The adjacent soil is covered with sculptured obelisks, pillars, and idols, with finely dressed stones, and with blocks ornamented with skilfully carved figures of the characteristic Maya hieroglyphs, which, could they be deciphered, would doubtless reveal the story of this strange and solitary city.

In western Guatemala, at Utatla, the ancient capital of the Quiches, a tribe allied to the Mayas, several pyramids still remain. One is 120 feet high, surmounted by a stone wall, and another is ascended by a staircase of nineteen steps, each nineteen inches in height.

The literary remains (such as Alphabets, Hieroglyphs, Manuscripts, etc.) of the Maya and Aztec races are in some respects as vivid a proof of the extinct civilizations as any of the architectural monuments already discussed. Both Aztecs and Mayans of Yucatan and Central America used picture-writing, and sometimes an imperfect form of hieroglyphics. The most elementary kind was simply a rough sketch of a scene or historical group which they wished to record. When, for example, Cortés had his first interview with some messengers sent by Montezuma, one of the Aztecs was observed sketching the dress and appearance of the Spaniards, and then completing his picture by using colors. Even in recent times Indians have recorded facts by pictographs: in Harper's Magazine (August, 1902) we read that "pictographs and painted rocks to the number of over 3,000 are scattered all over the United States, from the Dighton Rock, Massachusetts (*v.* pp. 27, 28), to the Kern River Cañon in California, and from the Florida Cape to the Mouse River in Manitoba. The identity of the Indians with their ancient progenitors is further proved by relics, mortuary customs, linguistic similarities, plants and vegetables, and primitive industrial and mechanical arts, which have remained constant throughout the ages." The pictographs of the Kern River Cañon, according to the same writer, were inscribed on the rocks there "about five thousand years ago."

A more advanced form of picture-writing is frequently found in the Mayan and other inscriptions and manuscripts. Two objects are repre-

sented, whose names, when pronounced together, give a sound which suggests the name to be recorded or remembered. Thus, the name Gladstone may be expressed in this manner by two pictures, one a laughing face (i. e., "happy" or "glad" the other a rock (i. e., "stone"). It is exactly the same contrivance that is used to construct the puzzle called a "rebus."

A third form of hieroglyphic was by devising some conventional mark or symbol to suggest the initial sound of the name to be recorded. Such a mark or character would be a "letter," in fact; and thus the prehistoric alphabets were arrived at, not only among the early Mayans of Yucatan, etc., but among the prehistoric peoples of Asia, as the Chinese, the Hittites, etc., as well as the primeval Egyptians. Many of the sculptures in Copan and Palenque to which we have referred contain pictographs and hieroglyphs. A Spanish Bishop of Yucatan drew up a Mayan alphabet in order to express the hieroglyphs on monuments and manuscripts in Roman letters; but much more data are needed before scholars will read the ancient Mayan-Aztec tongues as they have been enabled to understand the Egyptian inscriptions or the cuneiform records of Babylonia. For the American hieroglyphs we still lack a second Young or Champollion.

There are three famous manuscripts in the Mayan character:

1. The Dresden Codex, preserved in the Royal Library of that city. It is called a "religious and astrological ritual" by Abbé Brasseur.

2. Codex Troano, in Madrid, described in two folios by Abbé Brasseur.

3. Codex Peresianus, named from the wrapper in which it was found, 1859, which had the name "Perez." It is also known as Codex Mexicanus.

In Lord Kingsborough's great work on Mexican Antiquities there are several of the Mayan manuscripts printed in facsimile, and others in a book by M. Aubin, of Paris.

Each group of letters in a Mayan inscription is enclosed in an irregular oval, supposed to resemble the cross-section of a pebble; hence the term *calculiform* (i. e., "pebble-shaped") is applied to their hieroglyphs, as *cuneiform* (i. e., "wedge-shaped") is applied to the Babylonian and Assyrian letters.

The paper which the prehistoric Mexicans (Mayas, Aztecs, or Tescucans, etc.) used for writing and drawing upon was of vegetable origin, like the Egyptian papyrus. It was made by macerating the leaves of the *maguey*, a plant of the greatest importance (*v.* p. 94). When the surface of the paper was glazed, the letters were painted on in brilliant colors, proceeding from left to right, as we do. Each book was a strip of paper, several yards long and about ten inches wide, not rolled round a stick, as the volumes of ancient Rome were, but folded zigzag, like a screen. The protecting boards which held the book were often artistically carved and painted.

The topics of the ordinary books, so far as we yet know, were religious ritual, dreams, and prophecies, the calendar, chronological notes, medical superstitions, portents of marriage and birth. The written language was in common and ex-

tensive use for the legal conveyance and sale of property.

One of the most remarkable facts connected with this extinct civilization was the accuracy of their calendar and chronological system. Their calendar was actually superior to that then existing in Europe. They had two years: one for civil purposes, of three hundred and sixty-five days, divided into eighteen months of twenty days, besides five supplementary days; the other, a ritual or ecclesiastical year, to regulate the public festivals. The civil year required thirteen days to be added at the end of every fifty-two years, so as to harmonize with the ritual year. Each month contained four weeks of five days, but as each of the twenty days (forming a month) had a distinct name, Humboldt concluded that the names were borrowed from a prehistoric calendar used in India and Tartary.

Wilson (Prehistoric Man, i, 133) remarks:

> By the unaided results of native science the dwellers on the Mexican plateau had effected an adjustment of civil to solar time so nearly correct that when the Spaniards landed on their coast, their own reckoning according to the unreformed Julian calendar, was really eleven days in error, compared with that of the barbarian nation whose civilization they so speedily effaced.

In 1790 there was found in the Square of Mexico a famous relic, the Mexican Calendar Stone, "one of the most striking monuments of American antiquity." It was long supposed to have been intended for chronological purposes; but later authorities call it a votive tablet or sacrificial altar.* Similar circular stones have

* Pp. 68–70, *v.* p. 95.

been dug up in other parts of Mexico and in Yucatan.

Both the Mayas and the Aztecs excelled in the ordinary arts of civilized life. Paper-making has already been spoken of. Cotton being an important produce of their soil, they understood its spinning, dyeing, and weaving so well that the Spaniards mistook some of the finer Aztec fabrics for silk. They cultivated maize, potatoes, plantains, and other vegetables. Both in Mexico and Yucatan they produced beautiful work in feathers; metal working was not so important as in some countries, being chiefly for ornamental purposes. In fact, it was the comparative plenty of gold and silver around Mexico that delayed the invasion of the Mayan country for more than twenty years. The Mayas had developed trade to a considerable extent before the Spanish invasion, and interchanged commodities with the island of Cuba. It was there, accordingly, that Columbus first saw this people, and first heard of Yucatan.

Of the Mexican remains on the central plateau, the most conspicuous is the mound or pyramid of Cholula, although it retains few traces of prehistoric art. A modern church with a dome and two towers now occupies the summit, with a paved road leading up to it. It is chiefly noted, first, by antiquaries, as having originally been a great temple of Quetzalcoatl, the beneficent deity, famous in story; and, secondly, for the fierce struggle around the mound and on the slopes between the Mexicans and Spanish. (*V.* pp. 130–133.)

Another mound in this district, Yochicalco, lies

seventy-five miles southwest of the capital. It is considered one of the best memorials of the extinct civilization, consisting of five terraces supported by stone walls, and formerly surmounted by a pyramid.

Passing from the traces of Aztec and Mayan civilization, we may now glance at the antiquities of the Colombian states. There are no temples or large structures, because the natives, before the Spanish conquest, used timber for building, but owing to the abundance of gold in their brooks and rivers, they developed skill in gold-working, and produced fine ornaments of wonderful beauty. Many hollow figures have been found, evidently cast from molds, representing men, beasts, and birds, etc. Stone-cutting was also an art of this ancient race, sometimes applied to making idols bearing hieroglyphs.

When the Spaniards invaded them to take their gold and precious stones, the "Chibchas," who then held the Colombian table-land and valleys, threw large quantities of those valuables into a lake near Bogota, the capital. It was afterward attempted to recover those treasures by draining off the water, but only a small portion was found; and in the present year (1903) a new engineering attempt has been made. A Spanish writer, in 1858, asserted that evidence was found in the caves and mines that in ancient times the Colombians produced an alloy of gold, copper, and iron having the temper and hardness of steel. On a tributary of the River Magdalena there are many curious stone images, sometimes with grotesquely carved faces.

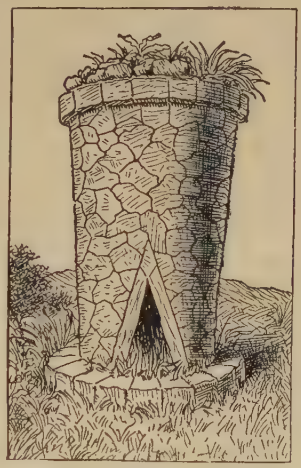
Turning next to the mound-builders, in the

Ohio and upper Mississippi Valley, we find traces of an extinct civilization in high mounds, evidently artificial, extensive embankments, broad deep ditches, terraced pyramids, and an interesting variety of stone implements and pottery. Some mounds were for burial-places, others for sacrificial purposes, others again as a site for building, like those we have seen in Mexico and Maya. Many enclosures contain more than fifty acres of land; and one embankment is fifty miles long. Among the relics associated with those works are articles of pottery, knives, and copper ornaments, hammered silver, mica, obsidian, pearls, beautifully sculptured pipes, shells, and stone implements. The mounds found in some of the Gulf States seem to confirm a theory that the mound-builders were the ancestors of the Choctaw Indians and their allies, and had been driven southward.

In the lower Mississippi Valley, eastward to the seacoast, there are many large earthworks, including round and quadrilateral mounds, embankments, canals, and artificial lakes. Similar works can be traced to the southern extremity of Florida. Some were constructed as sites for large buildings. The tribes to whom they are due are now known to have been agricultural—growing maize, beans, and pumpkins; with these products and those of the chase they supported a considerable population.

Among other antiquarian remains in America are the cliff-houses and "pueblos." The former peculiarity is explained by the deep cañons of the dry table-land of Colorado. Imagine a narrow deep cutting or narrow trench worn by water-

courses out of solid rock, deep enough to afford a channel to the stream from 500 to 1,500 feet below the plateau above. Next imagine one of the caves which the water many ages ago had worn out of the perpendicular sides of the cañon; and in that cave a substantial, well-built structure of cut stones bedded in firm mortar. Such are the "cliff-houses," sometimes of two stories. Occasionally there is a watch-tower perched on a conspicuous point of rock near a cliff-dwelling, with small windows looking to the east and north. These curious buildings, though now prehistoric, in a sense, are believed by archeologists to be later than the Spanish conquest.



Chulpa or Stone Tomb of the Peruvians.

Peru is very important archeologically, but some interesting points will properly fall under our general account of that country and its conquest by Spain.

In Peruvian architecture, we find "Cyclopean walls," with polygonal stones of five or six feet diameter, so well polished and adjusted that no mortar was necessary; sometimes with a projecting part of the stone fitting exactly into a corre-

sponding cavity of the stone immediately above or below it. Such huge stones are of hard granite or basalt, etc. The walls are often very massive and substantial, sometimes from thirty to forty feet in thickness. The only approach to the modern "arch" in the Peruvian structures is a device similar to that which was described under the Mayan architecture.

Some important buildings were surrounded with large upright stones, similar to the famous "Druidic" temple at Stonehenge. All of the chief structures were accurately placed with reference to the cardinal points, and the main entrance always faced the east. The Peruvian tombs were very elaborate, one kind being made by cutting caverns in the steep precipices of the cordillera and then carefully walling in the entrance. Another variety (the *chulpa*) was really a stone tower erected above ground, twelve to thirty feet high. The chulpas were sometimes built in groups.

CHAPTER V

MEXICO BEFORE THE SPANISH INVASION

THE Aztecs and the Tescucans were the chief races occupying the great table-land of Anahuac, including, as we have seen, the famous Mexican Valley. In the preceding chapter we have set forth some of the leading points in the extinct civilization of those races, and also that of the Mayas, who in several respects were perhaps superior to the Anahuac kingdoms.

Several features of the early Mexican civilization will come before us as we accompany the European conquerors in their march over the table-land. Meantime, we glance first at the geography of this magnificent region, and secondly at the manners and institutions of the people, their industrial arts, etc., and their terrible religion. The last-mentioned topic has already been partly discussed in Chapter III.

The Tropic of Cancer passes through the middle of Mexico, and therefore its southern half, which is the most important, is all under the burning sun of the "torrid zone." This heat, however, is greatly modified by the height of the surface above sea-level, since the country, taken as a whole, is simply an extensive table-land. The height of the plain in the two central states, Mexico and Puebla, is 8,000 feet, or about double the average height of the highest summits in the British Isles. On the west of the republic is a continuous chain of mountains, and on the east of the table-land run a series of mountainous groups parallel to the seacoast, with a summit in Vera Cruz of over 13,400 feet. To the south of the capital an irregular range running east and west contains these remarkable volcanoes—Colima, 14,400 feet; Jorulla, Popocatepetl, 17,800; Orizaba (extinct), 18,300, the highest summit in Mexico, and, with the exception of some of the mountains of Alaska, in North America. The great plateau-basin formed around the capital and its lakes is completely enclosed by mountains.

This high table-land has its own climate as compared with the broad tract lying along the Atlantic. Hence the latter is known as the hot

region (*caliente*), and the former the cold region (*fria*). Between the two climates, as the traveler mounts from the sea-level to the great plateau, is the temperate region (*templada*), an intermediate belt of perpetual humidity, a welcome escape from the heat and deadly malaria of the hot region with its "bilious fevers." Sometimes as he passes along the bases of the volcanic mountains, casting his eye "down some steep slope or almost unfathomable ravine on the margin of the road, he sees their depths glowing with the rich blooms and enameled vegetation of the tropics." This contrast arises from the height he has now gained above the hot coast region.

The climate on the table-land is only cold in a relative sense, being mild to Europeans, with a mean temperature at the capital of 60°, seldom lowered to the freezing-point. The "temperate" slopes form the "Paradise of Mexico," from "the balmy climate, the magnificent scenery, and the wealth of semitropical vegetation."

The Aztec and Tescucan laws were kept in state records, and shown publicly in hieroglyphs. The great crimes against society were all punished with death, including the murder of a slave. Slaves could hold property, and all their sons were freedmen. The code in general showed real respect for the leading principles of morality.

In Mexico, as in ancient Egypt,

the soldier shared with the priest the highest consideration. The king must be an experienced warrior. The tutelary deity of the Aztecs was the god of war. A great object of military expeditions was to gather hecatombs of captives for his altars. The soldier who fell in battle was transported at once to the region of ineffable bliss in the bright

mansions of the sun. . . . Thus every war became a crusade; and the warrior was not only raised to a contempt of danger, but courted it—animated by a religious enthusiasm like that of the early Saracen or the Christian crusader.

The officers of the armies wore rich and conspicuous uniforms—a tight-fitting tunic of quilted cotton sufficient to turn the arrows of the native Indians; a cuirass (for superior officers) made of thin plates of gold or silver; an overcoat or cloak of variegated feather-work; helmets of wood or silver, bearing showy plumes, adorned with precious stones and gold ornaments. Their belts, collars, bracelets, and earrings were also of gold or silver.

Southey, in his poem, makes his Welsh prince, Madoc, thus boast:

Their mail, if mail it may be called, was woven
Of vegetable down, like finest flax,
Bleached to the whiteness of new-fallen snow,
. . . Others of higher office were arrayed
In feathery breastplates, of more gorgeous hue
Than the gay plumage of the mountain-cock,
Than the pheasants' glittering pride. But what were these
Or what the thin gold hauberk, when opposed
To arms like ours in battle?

Madoc, i, 7.

We learn of the ancient Mexicans, to their honor, that in the large towns hospitals were kept for the cure of the sick and wounded soldiers, and as a permanent refuge if disabled. Not only so, says a Spanish historian, but "the surgeons placed over them were so far better than those in Europe that they did not protract the cure to increase the pay."

Even the red man of the woods, as we learn from Fenimore Cooper and Catlin, believes reverently in the Great Spirit who upholds the universe; and similarly his more civilized brother of Mexico or Tezcuco spoke of a Supreme Creator, Lord of Heaven and Earth. In their prayers some of the phrases were:

> The God by whom we live, omnipresent, knowing all thoughts, giving all gifts, without whom man is nothing, invisible, incorporeal, of perfect perfection and purity, under whose wings we find repose and a sure defense.

Prescott, however, remarks that notwithstanding such attributes "the idea of unity—of a being with whom volition is action, who has no need of inferior ministers to execute his purposes—was too simple, or too vast, for their understandings; and they sought relief, as usual, in a plurality of deities, who presided over the elements, the changes of the seasons, and the various occupations of man."

The Aztecs, in fact, believed in thirteen *dii majores* and over 200 *dii minores*. To each of these a special day was assigned in the calendar, with its appropriate festival. Chief of them all was that bloodthirsty monster *Huitzilopochtli*, the hideous god of war—tutelary deity of the nation. There was a huge temple to him in the capital, and on the great altar before his image there, and on all his altars throughout the empire, the reeking blood of thousands of human victims was being constantly poured out.

The terrible name of this Mexican Mars has greatly puzzled scholars of the language. According to one derivation, the name is a com-

pound of two words, *humming-bird* and *on the left*, because his image has the feathers of that bird on the left foot. Prescott naturally thinks that "too amiable an etymology for so ruffian a deity." The other name of the war-god, *Mexitl* (i. e., "the hare of the aloes"), is much better

Quetzalcoatl.

known, because from it is derived the familiar name of the capital.

The god of the air, *Quetzalcoatl*, a beneficent deity, who taught Mexicans the use of metals, agriculture, and the arts of government. Prescott remarks that

> he was doubtless one of those benefactors of their species who have been deified by the gratitude of posterity.

There was a remarkable tradition of Quetzalcoatl, preserved among the Mexicans, that he had been a king, afterward a god, and had a temple

dedicated to his worship at Cholula * when on his way to the Mexican Gulf. Embarking there, he bade his people a long farewell, promising that he and his descendants would revisit them. The expectation of his return prepared the way for the success of the tall white-skinned invaders.

In the Aztec agriculture, the staple plant was of course the *maize* or Indian corn. Humboldt tells us that at the conquest it was grown throughout America, from the south of Chile to the River St. Lawrence; and it is still universal in the New World. Other important plants on the Aztec soil were the *banana*, which (according to one Spanish writer) was the forbidden fruit that tempted our poor mother Eve; the *cacao*, whose fruit supplies the valuable chocolate; the *vanilla*, used for flavoring; and most important of all, the *maguey*, or Mexican aloe, much valued because its leaves were manufactured into paper, and its juice by fermentation becomes the national intoxicant, "pulque." The *maguey*, or great Mexican aloe, grown all over the table-land, is called "the miracle of nature," producing not only the *pulque*, but supplying *thatch* for the cottages, *thread* and *cords* from its tough fiber, *pins* and *needles* from the thorns which grow on the leaves, an excellent *food* from its roots, and *writing-paper* from its leaves. One writer, after speaking of the "pulque" being made from the "maguey," adds, "with what remains of these leaves they manufacture excellent and very fine cloth, resembling holland or the finest linen."

The *itztli*, formerly mentioned as being used at the sacrifices by the officiating priest, was

* The ruins were referred to in chap. iv, (*v.* p. 84, also 130.)

"obsidian," a dark transparent mineral, of the greatest hardness, and therefore useful for making knives and razors. The Mexican sword was serrated, those of the finest quality being of course edged with itztli. Sculptured figures abounded in every Aztec temple and town, but in design very inferior to the ancient specimens of Egypt and Babylonia, not to mention Greece. A remarkable collection of their sculptured images occurred in the *place* or great square of Mexico—the Aztec forum—and similar spots. Ever since the Spanish invasion the destruction of the native objects of art has been ceaseless and ruthless. "Two celebrated bas-reliefs of the last Montezuma and his father," says Prescott, "cut in the solid rock, in the beautiful groves of Chapoltepec, were deliberately destroyed, as late as the last century [i. e., the eighteenth], by order of the government." He further remarks:

> This wantonness of destruction provokes the bitter animadversion of the Spanish writer Martyr, whose enlightened mind respected the vestiges of civilization wherever found. "The conquerors," says he, "seldom repaired the buildings that they defaced; they would rather sack twenty stately cities than erect one good edifice."

The pre-Columbian Mexicans inherited a practical knowledge of mechanics and engineering. The Calendar Stone, for example (spoken of in the preceding chapter), a mass of dark porphyry estimated at fifty tons weight, was carried for a distance of many leagues from the mountains beyond Lake Chalco, through a rough country crossed by rivers and canals. In the passage its weight broke down a bridge over a canal, and the

heavy rock had to be raised from the water beneath. With such obstacles, without the draft assistance of horses or cattle, how was it possible to effect such a transport? Perhaps the mechanical skill of their builders and engineers had contrived some tramway or other machinery. An English traveler had a curious suggestion:

Latrobe accommodates the wonders of nature and art very well to each other, by suggesting that these great masses of stone were transported by means of the mastodon, whose remains are occasionally disinterred in the Mexican Valley.

The Mexicans wove many kinds of cotton cloth, sometimes using as a dye the rich crimson of the cochineal insect. They made a more expensive fabric by interweaving the cotton with the fine hair of rabbits and other animals; sometimes embroidering with pretty designs of flowers and birds, etc. The special art of the Aztec weaver was in feather-work, which when brought to Europe produced the highest admiration:

With feathers they could produce all the effect of a beautiful mosaic. The gorgeous plumage of the tropical birds, especially of the parrot tribe, afforded every variety of color; and the fine down of the humming-bird, which reveled in swarms among the honeysuckle bowers of Mexico, supplied them with soft aerial tints that gave an exquisite finish to the picture. The feathers, pasted on a fine cotton web, were wrought into dresses for the wealthy, hangings for apartments, and ornaments for the temples.

When some of the Mexican feather-work was shown at Strasbourg: "Never," says one admirer, "did I behold anything so exquisite for

brilliancy and nice gradation of color, and for beauty of design. No European artist could have made such a thing."

Instead of shops the Aztecs had in every town a market-place, where fairs were held every fifth day—i. e., once a week. Each commodity had a particular quarter, and the traffic was partly by barter, and partly by using the following articles as money: bits of tin shaped like an Egyptian cross (T), bags of cacao holding a specified number of grains, and, for large values, quills of gold-dust.

The married women among the Aztecs were treated kindly and respectfully by their husbands. The feminine occupations were spinning and embroidery, etc., as among the ancient Greeks, while listening to ballads and love stories related by their maidens and musicians (Ramusio, iii, 305).

In banquets and other social entertainments the women had an equal share with the men. Sometimes the festivities were on a large scale, with costly preparations and numerous attendants. The Mexicans, ancient and modern, have always been passionately fond of flowers, and on great occasions not only were the halls and courts strewed and adorned in profusion with blossoms of every hue and sweet odor, but perfumes scented every room. The guests as they sat down found ewers of water before them and cotton napkins, since washing the hands both before and after eating was a national habit of almost religious obligation.* Modern Europeans believe

* Sahagun (vi, 22) quotes the precise instructions of a father to his son: he must wash face and hands before sitting down

that tobacco was introduced from America in the time of Queen Isabella and Queen Elizabeth, but ages before that period the Aztecs at their banquets had the "fragrant weed" offered to the company, "in pipes, mixed up with aromatic substances, or in the form of cigars, inserted in tubes of tortoise-shell or silver." The smoke after dinner was no doubt preliminary to the *siesta* or nap of "forty winks." It is not known if the Aztec ladies, like their descendants in modern Mexico, also appreciated the *yetl*, as the Mexicans called "tobacco." Our word came from the natives of Hayti, one of the islands discovered by Columbus.

The tables of the Aztecs abounded in good food—various dishes of meat, especially game, fowl, and fish. The turkey, for example, was introduced into Europe from Mexico, although stupidly supposed to have come from Asia. The French named it *coq d'Inde*,* the "Indian cock," meaning American, but the ordinary hearer imagined *d'Inde* meant from Hindustan. The blunder arose from that misapplication of the word "Indian," first made by Columbus, as we formerly explained.

The Aztec cooks dressed their viands with various sauces and condiments, the more solid dishes being followed by fruits of many kinds, as well as sweetmeats and pastry. Chafing-dishes even were used. Besides the varieties of beautiful flowers

to table, and must not leave till he has repeated the operation and cleansed his teeth.

*The Spanish named this handsome bird *gallopavo* (Lat. *pavo*, the "peacock"). The wild turkey is larger and more beautiful than the tame, and therefore Benjamin Franklin, when speaking sarcastically of the "American Eagle," insisted that the wild turkey was the proper national emblem.

which adorned the table there were sculptured vases of silver and sometimes gold. At table

the favorite beverage was the *chocolatl* flavored with vanilla and different spices. The fermented juice of the maguey, with a mixture of sweets and acids, supplied also various agreeable drinks, of different degrees of strength.

When the young Mexicans of both sexes amused themselves with dances, the older people kept their seats in order to enjoy their *pulque* and gossip, or listen to the discourse of some guest of importance. The music which accompanied the dances was frequently soft and rather plaintive.

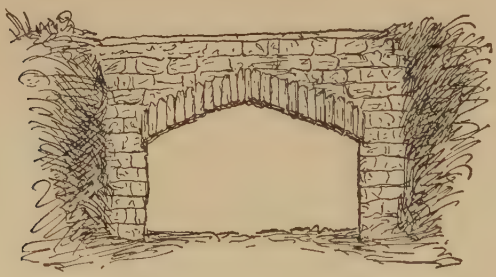
The early Mexicans included the Tezcucans as well as the Aztecs proper; and since their capitals were on the same lake and both races were closely akin, we may devote some space to these Alcohuans or eastern Aztecs. Their civilization was superior to that of the western Aztecs in some respects, and Nezahual-coyotl, their greatest prince, formed alliance with the western state, and then remodeled the various departments of his government. He had a council of war, another of finance, and a third of justice.

A remarkable institution, under King Nezahual-coyotl, was the "Council of Music," intended to promote the study of science and the practise of art.

Tezcuco, in fact, became the nursery not only of such sciences as could be compassed by the scholarship of the period, but of various useful and ornamental arts. "Its historians, orators, and poets were celebrated throughout the country. . . . Its idiom, more polished than the Mexican, continued long after the conquest to be

that in which the best productions of the native races were composed. Tezcuco was the Athens of the Western World. . . . Among the most illustrious of her bards was their king himself." A Spanish writer adds that it was to the eastern Aztecs that noblemen sent their sons "to study poetry, moral philosophy, the heathen theology, astronomy, medicine, and history."

The most remarkable problem connected with ancient Mexico is how to reconcile the general



Ancient Bridge near Tezcuco.

refinement and civilization with the sacrifices of human victims. There was no town or city but had its temples in public places, with stairs visibly leading up to the sacrificial stone, ever standing ready before some hideous idol or other—as already described.

In all countries there have been public spectacles of bloodshed, not only as in the gladiators in the ancient circus—

butchered to make a Roman holiday,

or the tournays of the middle ages, but in the

prize-ring fights and public executions by ax or guillotine, of the age that is just passing away. The thousands who perished for religious ideas by means of the Holy Roman Inquisition should not be overlooked by the Spanish writers who are so indignant that Montezuma and his priests sacrificed tens of thousands under the claims of a heathen religion. The very day on which we write these words, August 18th, is the anniversary of the last sentence for beheading passed by our House of Lords. By that sentence three Scottish "Jacobites" passed under the ax on Tower Hill, where their remains still rest in a chapel hard by. So lately as 1873, the Shah of Persia, when resident as a visitor in Buckingham Palace, was amazed to find that the laws of Great Britain prevented him from depriving five of his courtiers of their lives. They had just been found guilty of some paltry infringement of Persian etiquette. During the last generation or the previous one, both in England and Scotland, the country schoolmaster on a certain day had the schoolroom cleared so that the children and their friends should enjoy the treat of seeing all the game-cocks of the parish bleeding on the floor one after another, being either struck by a spur to the brain, or else wounded to a painful death. When James Boswell and others regularly attended the spectacles of Tyburn and sometimes cheered the wretched victim if he "died game," the philosopher will not wonder at the populace of some city of ancient Mexico crowding round the great temple and greedily watching the bloody sacrifice done with full sanction of the priesthood and the king.

The primitive religions were derived from sun-worship, and as fire is the nearest representative of the sun, it seemed essential to *burn* the victim offered as a sacrifice. At Carthage, the great Phenician colony, children were cruelly sacrificed by fire to the god Melkarth of Tyre. "Melkarth" being simply *Melech Kiriath* (i. e., "King of the City"), and therefore identical with the "Moloch" or "Molech" of the Ammonites, Moabites, and Israelites. In the earliest prehistoric age the children of Ammon, Moab, and Israel were apparently so closely akin that they had practically the same religion and worshiped the same idols. The tribal god was originally the god of Syria or Canaan. In more than a dozen places of the Old Testament we find the Hebrews accused of burning their children or passing them through the fire to the sun-god, but the ancient Mexicans did not burn their victims, and *in no case were the victims their own children*. The victims were captives taken in war, or persons convicted of crime; and thus the Mexicans were in atrocity far surpassed by those races akin to the Hebrews who are much denounced by the sacred writers, e. g.:

> Josiah . . . defiled Topheth that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech (2 Kings xxiii, 10).
>
> They have built also the high places to burn their sons with fire for burnt-offerings (Jer. xix, 5).
>
> Yea, they shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan (Ps. cvi, 37).

That a father should offer his own child as a sacrifice to the sun-god or any other, would to

the mild and gentle Aztec be too dreadful a conception. It is the enormous number who were immolated that shocks the European mind, but to the populace enjoying the spectacle the victims were enemies of the king or criminals deserving execution.

Perhaps it is a more difficult problem to explain how so civilized a community as the Aztec races undoubtedly were could look with complacency upon any one tasting a dish composed of some part of the captive he had taken in battle. It is not only repulsive as an idea, but seems impossible. Yet much depends on the point of view as well as the atmosphere. According to archeologists, all the primeval races of men could at a pinch feed on human flesh, but after many generations learned to do better without it. We may have simply outgrown the craving, till at last we call it unnatural, whereas those ancient Mexicans, with all their wealth of food, had refined upon it. Let us again refer to the Old Testament:

> Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters and these hast thou sacrificed to be devoured (Ezek. xvi, 20).
>
> . . . have caused their sons to pass for them through the fire, to devour them (Ezek. xxiii, 37).

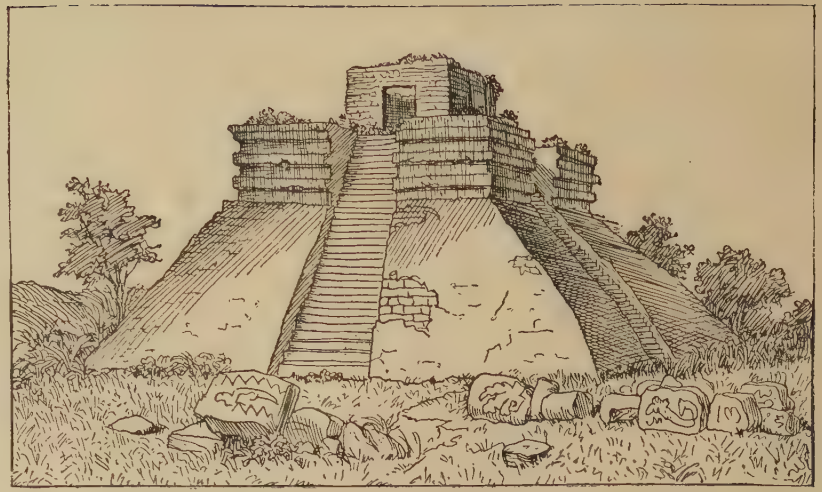
We may therefore infer that to the early races of Canaan (including Israel), as well as to the primeval Aztecs, it was a privilege and religious custom to eat part of any sacrifice that had been offered.

There can be little doubt, to any one who has studied the earliest human antiquities, that all races indulged in cannibalism, not only during

that enormously remote age called Paleolithic, but in comparatively recent though still prehistoric times. "This is clearly proved by the number of human bones, chiefly of women and young persons, which have been found charred by fire and split open for extraction of the marrow." Such charred bones have frequently been preserved in caves, as at Chaleux in Belgium, where in some instances they occurred "in such numbers as to indicate that they had been the scene of cannibal feasts."

The survival of human sacrifice among the Aztecs, with its accompanying traces of cannibalism, was due to the savagery of a long previous condition of their Indian race; just as in the Greek drama, when that ancient people had attained a high level of culture and refinement, the sacrifice of a human life, sometimes a princess or other distinguished heroine, was not unfrequent. We remember Polyxena, the virgin daughter of Hecuba, whom her own people resolved to sacrifice on the tomb of Achilles; and her touching bravery, as she requests the Greeks not to bind her, being ashamed, she says, "having lived a princess to die a slave." A better known example is Iphigenia, so beloved by her father, King Agamemnon, and yet given up by him a victim for purposes of state and religion.

From the Greek drama, human sacrifices frequently passed to the Roman; nor does such a refined critic as Horace object to it, but only suggests that the bloodshed ought to be perpetrated behind the scenes. In Seneca's play, Medea (quoted in our Introduction), that rule was grossly violated, since the children have their



Teocalli, Aztec Temple for Human Sacrifices.

throats cut by their heroic mother in full view of the audience. In the same passage (Ars Poët., 185, 186) Horace forbids a banquet of human flesh being prepared before the eyes of the public, as had been done in a play written by Ennius, the Roman poet. The religious sacrifice of human victims by the "Druids" or priests of ancient Gaul and Britain seems exactly parallel to the wholesale executions on the Mexican *teocallis*, since the wretched victims whom our Celtic ancestors packed for burning into those huge wicker images, were captives taken in battle, like those stretched for slaughter upon the Mexican stone of sacrifice.

Human sacrifice was so common in civilized Rome that it was not till the first century B. C. that a law was passed expressly forbidding it—(Pliny, Hist. Nat., xxx, 3, 4).

CHAPTER VI

ARRIVAL OF THE SPANIARDS

THE "New Birth" of the world, which characterized the end of the fifteenth century, had an enormous influence upon Spain. Her queen, the "great Catholic Isabella," had, by assisting Columbus, done much in the great discovery of the Western World. Spain speedily had substantial reward in the boundless wealth poured into her lap, and the rich colonies added to her dominion. Thus in the beginning of the sixteenth century the new consolidated Spain, formed by the union

of the two kingdoms, Castile and Aragon, became the richest and greatest of all the European states.

The Spanish governors in the West Indies being ambitious of planting new colonies in the name of the Spanish King, conquest and annexation were stimulated in all directions. When Cuba and Hayti were overrun and annexed to Spain, not without much unjust treatment of the simple natives, as we have seen, they became centers of operation, whence expeditions could be sent to Trinidad or any other island, to Panama, to Yucatan, or Florida, or any other part of the continent. After the marvelous experience of Grijalva in Yucatan, then considered an island, and his report that its inhabitants were quite a civilized community compared with the natives of the isles, Velasquez, the Governor of Cuba, resolved at once to invade the new country for purposes of annexation and plunder.

Velasquez prepared a large expedition for this adventure, consisting of eleven ships with more than 600 armed men on board; and after much deliberation chose Fernando Cortés to be the commander. Who was this Cortés, destined by his military genius and unscrupulous policy to be comparable to Hannibal or Julius Cæsar among the ancients, and to Clive or Napoleon Bonaparte among the moderns? Velasquez knew him well as one of his subordinates in the cruel conquest of Cuba; before that Cortés had distinguished himself in Hayti as an energetic and skilled officer. Of an impetuous and fiery temper which he had learned to keep thoroughly in command, he was characterized by that quality possessed by all commanders of superior genius, the "art of

gaining the confidence and governing the minds of men." As a youth in Spain he had studied for the bar at the University of Salamanca; and in some of his speeches on critical occasions one can find certain traces of his academical training in the adroit arguments and clever appeals.

Other qualifications as an officer were his manly and handsome appearance, his affable manners, combined with "extraordinary address in all martial exercises, and a constitution of such vigor as to be capable of enduring any fatigue."

Cortés on reviewing his commission from the Governor, Velasquez, was too shrewd not to be aware of the importance of his new position. The "Great Admiral," with reference to the discovery of the New World, had said: "I have only opened the door for others to enter"; and Cortés was conscious that now was the moment for that entrance. Filled with unbounded ambition he rose to the occasion.

Velasquez somewhat hypocritically pretended that the object he had in view was merely barter with the natives of New Spain—that being the name given by Grijalva to Yucatan and the neighboring country. He ordered Cortés

> to impress on the natives the grandeur and goodness of his royal master; to invite them to give in their allegiance to him, and to manifest it by regaling him with such comfortable presents of gold, pearls, and precious stones as by showing their own good-will would secure his favor and protection.

Mustering his forces for the new expedition, Cortés found that he had 110 sailors, 553 soldiers, besides 200 Indians of the island; ten heavy guns,

four lighter ones, called falconets. He had also sixteen horses, knowing the effect of even a small body of cavalry in dealing with savages. On February 18, 1519, Cortés sailed with eleven vessels for the coast of Yucatan.

Landing at Tabasco, where Grijalva had found the natives friendly, Cortés found that the Yucatans had resolved to oppose him, and were presently assembled in great numbers. The result of the fighting, however, was naturally a foregone conclusion, partly on account of "the astonishment and terror excited by the destructive effect" of the European firearms, and the "monstrous apparition" of men on horseback. Such quadrupeds they had never seen before, and they concluded that the rider with his horse formed one unaccountable animal. Gomara and other chroniclers tell how St. James, the tutelar saint of Spain, appeared in the ranks on a gray horse, and led the Christians to victory over the heathen.

An especially fortunate thing for Cortés was that among the female slaves presented after this battle, there was one of remarkable intelligence, who understood both the Aztec and the Mayan languages, and soon learned the Spanish. She proved invaluable to Cortés as an interpreter, and afterward had a share in all his campaigns. She is generally called Marina.

If the Spanish accounts are true, stating that the native army consisted of five squadrons of 8,000 men each, then this victory is one of the most remarkable on record, as a proof of the value of gunpowder as compared with primitive bows and arrows. To the simple Americans the terrible invaders seemed actually to wield the thun-

der and the lightning. Next day Cortés made an arrangement with the chiefs; and after confidence was restored, asked where they got their gold from. They pointed to the high grounds on the west, and said *Culhua,* meaning Mexico.

The Palm Sunday being at hand, the conversion of the "heathen" was duly celebrated by pompous and solemn ceremonial. The army marched in procession with the priests at their head, accompanied by crowds of Indians of both sexes, till they reached the principal temple. A new altar being built, the image of the presiding deity was taken from its place and thrown down, to make room for that of the Virgin carrying the infant Saviour.

Cortés now learned that the capital of the Mexican Empire was on the mountain plains nearly seventy leagues inland; and that the ruler was the great and powerful Montezuma.

It was on the morning of Good Friday that Cortés landed on the site of Vera Cruz, which after the conquest of Mexico speedily grew into a flourishing seaport, becoming the commercial capital of New Spain. A friendly conference took place between Cortés and Teuhtlile, an Aztec chief, who asked from what country the strangers had come and why they had come.

"I am a servant," replied Cortés, "of a mighty monarch beyond the seas, who rules over an immense empire, having kings and princes for his vassals. Since my master has heard of the greatness of the Mexican Emperor he has desired me to enter into communication with him, and has sent me as envoy to wait upon Montezuma with a present in token of good-will, and with a message

which I must deliver in person. When can I be admitted to your sovereign's presence?"

The Aztec chief replied with an air of dignity: "How is it that you have been here only two days, and demand to see the Emperor? If there is another monarch as powerful as Montezuma, I have no doubt my master will be happy to interchange courtesies."

The slaves of Teuhtlile presented to Cortés

ten loads of fine cotton, several mantles of that curious feather-work whose rich and delicate dyes might vie with the most beautiful painting, and a wicker basket filled with ornaments of wrought gold, all calculated to inspire the Spaniards with high ideas of the wealth and mechanical ingenuity of the Mexicans.

Having duly expressed his thanks, Cortés then laid before the Aztec chief the presents intended for Montezuma. These were "an armchair richly carved and painted; a crimson cap bearing a gold medal emblazoned with St. George and the Dragon; collars, bracelets, and other ornaments of cut-glass, which, in a country where glass was unknown, might claim to have the value of real gems."

During the interview Teuhtlile had been curiously observing a shining gilt helmet worn by a soldier, and said that it was exactly like that of Quetzalcoatl. "Who is he?" asked Cortés. "Quetzalcoatl is the god about whom the Aztecs have the prophecy that he will come back to them across the sea." Cortés promised to send the helmet to Montezuma, and expressed a wish that it would be returned filled with the gold-dust of the

Aztecs, that he might compare it with the Spanish gold-dust!

One reporter who was present says:

> He further told Governor Teuhtlile that the Spaniards were troubled with a disease of the heart for which gold was a specific remedy!

Another incident of this notable interview was that one of the Mexican attendants was observed by Cortés to be scribbling with a pencil. It was an artist sketching the appearance of the strangers, their dress, arms, and attitude, and filling in the picture with touches of color. Struck with the idea of being thus represented to the Mexican monarch, Cortés ordered the cavalry to be exercised on the beach in front of the artists.

> The bold and rapid movements of the troops, . . . the apparent ease with which they managed the fiery animals on which they were mounted, the glancing of their weapons, and the shrill cry of the trumpet, all filled the spectators with astonishment; but when they heard the thunders of the cannon, which Cortés ordered to be fired at the same time, and witnessed the volumes of smoke and flame issuing from these terrible engines, and the rushing sound of the balls, as they dashed through the trees of the neighboring forest, shivering their branches into fragments, they were filled with consternation and wonder, from which the Aztec chief himself was not wholly free.

This was all faithfully copied by the picture-writers, so far as their art went, in sketching and vivid coloring. They also recorded the ships of the strangers—"the water-houses," as they were

named—whose dark hulls and snow-white sails were swinging at anchor in the bay.

Meantime what had Montezuma been doing, the sad-faced * and haughty Emperor of Mexico, land of the Aztecs and the Tezcucans? At the beginning of his reign he had as a skilful general led his armies as far as Honduras and Nicaragua, extending the limits of the empire, so that it had now reached the maximum.

Tezcuco, the sister state to Mexico, had latterly shown hostility to Montezuma, and still more formidable was the republic of Tlascala, lying between his capital and the coast. Prodigies and prophecies now began to affect all classes of the population in the Mexican Valley. Everybody spoke of the return from over the sea of the popular god Quetzalcoatl, the fair-skinned and long-haired (p. 93). A generation had already elapsed since the first rumors that white men in great mysterious vessels, bearing in their hands the thunder and lightning, were seizing the islands and must soon seize the mainland.

No wonder that Montezuma, stern, tyrannical, and disappointed, should be dismayed at the news of Grijalva's landing, and still more so when hearing of the fleet and army of Cortés, and seeing their horsemen pictured by his artists—the whole accompanied by exaggerated accounts of the guns and cannon able to produce thunder and lightning. After holding a council, Montezuma resolved to send an embassy to Cortés, presenting him with a present which should reflect the incomparable grandeur and resources of Mexico,

* The name Montezuma means "sad or severe man," a title suited to his features, though not to his mild character.

and at the same time furnishing an approach to the capital.

The governor Teuhtlile on this second occasion was accompanied by two large wagons and ten slaves, bearing the present from Montezuma to Cortés. As they entered the pavilion of the Spanish general the air was filled with clouds of incense which rose from censers carried by some attendants.

Some delicately wrought mats were then unrolled, and as soon the slaves covered the various articles shown before, consisting chiefly of vases and ornaments of pure gold, collars and bracelets of the same metal, sandals, fans and crests of turquoise feathers, ornamented with gold and silver thread, and sprinkled with pearls and precious stones, collections of birds and animals in wrought and cast gold and silver of exquisite workmanship, complete armours and suits of cotton, like to that of rich and various dyes, interwoven with feathers, and, indeed, the utensils of painting ..... The things which excited most admiration were two circular plates of gold and silver, as large as carriage wheels; one representing the sun was richly carved with plants and animals. It was three palms in circumference, and was worth above £50,000 sterling.*

Cortés was interested in seeing the articles brought back to him full to the brim with grains of gold. The explorers brought from Montezuma likewise did not please him much. Cortés even vexed himself from having a personal interview by the distance being too great,

* It appears the Mexicans gave £5,000 for [illegible] which is £50,000 in [illegible] the plate of the sun gives 30,000 x 28 = 8,500 x 31 = £50,500.

and the journey beset with difficulties and dangers from formidable enemies. . . . All that could be done, therefore, was for the strangers to return to their own land."

Soon after Cortés, by a species of statecraft, formed a new municipality, thus transforming his camp into a civil community. The name of the new city was *Villa Rica de Vera Cruz*, i. e., "the Rich Town of the True Cross." Once the municipality was formed, Cortés resigned before them his office of captain general, and thus became free from the authority of Velasquez. The city council at once chose Cortés to be captain general and chief justice of the colony. He could now go forward unchecked by any superior except the Crown.

It was a desperate undertaking to climb with an army from the hot region of this flat coast through the varied succession of "slopes" which form the temperate region, and at last, on the high table-land, obtain entrance upon the great enclosed valley of Mexico. Cortés found that an essential preliminary was to gain the friendship of the Totonacs, a nation tributary to Montezuma. Their subjection to the Aztecs he had already verified, since one day when holding a conference with the Totonac leaders and a neighboring cazique (i. e., "prince"), Cortés saw five men of haughty appearance enter the market-place, followed by several attendants, and at once receive the politest attention from the Totonacs.

Cortés asked Marina, his slave interpreter, who or what they were. "They are Aztec nobles," she replied, "sent by Montezuma to receive tribute." Presently the Totonac chiefs came to Cortés

with looks of dire dismay, to inform him of the great Emperor's resentment at the entertainment offered to the Spaniards, and demanding in expiation twenty young men and women for sacrifice to the Aztec gods.

Cortés, with every look of indignation, insisted that the Totonacs should not only refuse to comply, but should seize the Aztec messengers and hold them strictly confined in prison. Unscrupulous to gain his ends, Cortés by lies and cunning duplicity managed to set the Mexican nobles free, dismissing them with a friendly message to Montezuma, while at the same time securing the confidence of the simple-minded Totonacs, urging them to join the Spaniards and make a bold effort to regain their independence. Some thought that Cortés was really the kindly divinity Quetzalcoatl, promised by the prophets to bring freedom and happiness.

As an instance of the religious enthusiasm of the Spanish invaders, we may give the account of the "conversion" of Zempoalla, a city in the Totonac district. When Cortés pressed upon the cazique of Zempoalla that his mission was to turn the Indians from the abominations of their present religion, that prince replied that he could not accept what the Spanish priests had told him about the Creator and Ruler of the Universe; especially that he ever stooped to become a mere man, weak and poor, so as to suffer voluntarily persecution and even death at the hands of some of his own creatures. The cazique added that he "would resist any violence offered to his gods, who would, indeed, avenge the act themselves by the instant destruction of their enemies."

Cortés and his men seized the opportunity. There is no doubt that, after witnessing some of the barbarous sacrifices of human victims followed by cannibal feasts, their souls had naturally been sickened. They now proceeded to force the work of conversion as soon as Cortés had appealed to them and declared that "God and the holy saints would never favor their enterprise, if such atrocities were allowed; and that for his own part, he was resolved the Indian idols should be demolished that very hour if it cost him his life.

"Scarcely waiting for his commands the Spaniards moved toward one of the principal *teocallis,* or temples, which rose high on a pyramidal foundation with a steep ascent of stone steps in the middle. The cazique, divining their purpose, instantly called his men to arms. The Indian warriors gathered from all quarters, with shrill cries and clashing of weapons, while the priests, in their dark cotton robes, with disheveled tresses matted with blood, rushed frantic among the natives, calling on them to protect their gods from violation! All was now confusion and tumult. . . . Cortés took his usual prompt measures. Causing the cazique and some of the principal citizens and priests to be arrested, he commanded them to quiet the people, declaring that if a single arrow was shot against a Spaniard, it should cost every one of them his life. . . . The cazique covered his face with his hands, exclaiming that the gods would avenge their own wrongs.

"The Christians were not slow in availing themselves of his tacit acquiescence. Fifty soldiers, at a signal from their general, sprang up the great

stairway of the temple, entered the building on the summit, the walls of which were black with human gore, and dragged the huge wooden idols to the edge of the terrace. Their fantastic forms and features, conveying a symbolic meaning which was lost on the Spaniards, seemed to their eyes only the hideous lineaments of Satan. With great alacrity they rolled the colossal monsters down the steps of the pyramid, amid the triumphant shouts of their own companions and the groans and lamentations of the natives. They then consummated the whole by burning them in the presence of the assembled multitude."

After the temple had been cleansed from every trace of the idol-worship and its horrors, a new altar was raised, surmounted by a lofty cross, and hung with garlands of roses. A reaction having now set in among the Indians, many were willing to become Christians, and some of the Aztec priests even joined in a procession to signify their conversion, wearing white robes instead of their former dark mantles, and carrying lighted candles in their hands, "while an image of the Virgin half smothered under the weight of flowers was borne aloft, and, as the procession climbed the steps of the temple, was deposited above the altar. . . . The impressive character of the ceremony and the passionate eloquence of the good priest touched the feelings of the motley audience, until Indians as well as Spaniards, if we may trust the chronicler, were melted into tears and audible sobs."

Before finally marching westward toward the temperate "slopes" of the mountains, Cortés had another opportunity of proving his generalship

and prompt resource at a critical moment. When Agathocles, the autocratic ruler of Syracuse, sailed over to defeat the Carthaginians, the first thing he did on landing in Africa was to burn his ships, that his soldiers might have no opportunity of retreat, and no hope but in victory. Cortés now acted on exactly the same principle.

After discovering that a number of his soldiers had formed a conspiracy to seize one of the ships and sail to Cuba, Cortés, on conviction, punished two of the ringleaders with death. Soon after, he formed the extraordinary resolution of destroying his ships without the knowledge of his army.

The five worst ships were first ordered to be dismantled; and, soon after, to be sunk. When the rest were inspected, four of them were condemned in the same manner.

When the news reached Zempoalla, the army were excited almost to open mutiny. Cortés, however, was perfectly cool. Addressing the army collectively, he assured them that the ships were not fit for service, as had been shown by due inspection. "There is one important advantage gained to the army, viz., the addition of a hundred able-bodied recruits who were necessary to man the lost ships. Besides all that, of what use could ships be to us in the present expedition? As for me, I will remain here even without a comrade. As for those who shrink from the dangers of our glorious enterprise, let them go back, in God's name! Let them go home, since there is still one vessel left; let them go on board and return to Cuba. They can tell how they deserted their commander and their comrades, and pa-

tiently wait till they see us return loaded with the spoils of the Aztecs."

Persuasion is the end of true oratory. The reply of the army to Cortés was the unanimous shout "To Mexico! To Mexico!"

After beginning the gradual ascent in their march toward the table-land of Mexico, the first place noted by the invaders was Jalapa, a town which still retains its Aztec name, known to all the world by the well-known drug grown there. It is a favorite resort of the wealthier residents in Vera Cruz, and that too tropical plain which Cortés had just left. The mighty mountain Orizaba, one of the guardians of the Mexican Valley, is now full in sight, towering in solitary grandeur with its robe of snow.

At last they reached a town so populous that there were thirteen Aztec temples with the usual sacrificial stone for human victims before each idol. In the suburbs the Spanish were shocked by a gathering of human skulls, many thousand in number. This appalling reminder of the unspeakable sacrifices soon became a familiar sight as they marched through that country.

Cortés asked the cazique if he were subject to Montezuma. "Who is there," replied the local prince, "that is not tributary to that Emperor?" "*I* am not," said the stranger general. Cortés assured him that the monarch whom the Spaniards served had princes as vassals, who were more powerful than the Aztec ruler. The cazique said:

Montezuma could muster thirty great vassals, each master of 100,000 men. His revenues were incalculable, since

every subject, however poor, paid something. . . . More than 20,000 victims, the fruit of his wars, were annually sacrificed on the altars of his gods! His capital stood on a lake, in the center of a spacious valley. . . . The approach to the city was by means of causeways several miles long; and when the connecting bridges were raised all communication with the country was cut off.

The Indians showed the greatest curiosity respecting the dresses, weapons, horses, and dogs of their strange visitors. The country all around was then well wooded and full of villages and towns, which disappeared after the conquest. Humboldt remarked, when he traveled there, that the whole district had, "at the time of the arrival of the Spanish, been more inhabited and better cultivated, and that in proportion as they got higher up near the table-land, they found the villages more frequent, the fields more subdivided, and the people more law-abiding."

Before entering upon the table-land, Cortés resolved to visit the republic of Tlascala, which was noted for having retained its independence in spite of the Aztecs. After sending an embassy, consisting of the four chief Zempoallas, who had accompanied the army, he set out toward Tlascala, lingering as they proceeded, so that his ambassadors should have time to return. While wondering at the delay, they suddenly reached a remarkable fortification which marked the limits of the republic, and acted as a barrier against the Mexican invasions. Prescott thus describes it:

A stone wall nine feet in height and twenty in thickness, with a parapet a foot and a half broad raised on the summit for the protection of those who defended it. It had

only one opening in the center, made by two semicircular lines of wall overlapping each other for the space of forty paces, and affording a passageway between, ten paces wide, so contrived, therefore, as to be perfectly commanded by the inner wall. This fortification, which extended more than two leagues, rested at either end on the bold natural buttresses formed by the sierra. The work was built of immense blocks of stone nicely laid together without cement, and the remains still existing, among which are rocks of the whole breadth of the rampart, fully attest its solidity and size.

Who were the people of this stout-hearted republic? The Tlascalans were a kindred tribe to the Aztecs, and after coming to the Mexican Valley, toward the close of the twelfth century, had settled for many years on the western shore of Lake Tezcuco. Afterward they migrated to that district of fruitful valleys where Cortés found them; *Tlascala,* meaning "land of bread." They then, as a nation, consisted of four separate states, considerably civilized, and always able to protect their confederacy against foreign invasion. Their arts, religion, and architecture were the same as those of the Aztecs and Tezcucans.

More than once had the Aztecs attempted to bring the little republic into subjection, but in vain. In one campaign Montezuma had lost a favorite, besides having his army defeated; and though a much more formidable invasion followed, "the bold mountaineers withdrew into the recesses of their hills, and coolly watching their opportunity, rushed like a torrent on the invaders, and drove them back with dreadful slaughter from their territories."

The Tlascalans had of course heard of the

redoubtable Europeans and their advance upon Montezuma's kingdom, but not expecting any visit themselves, they were in doubt about the embassy sent by Cortés, and the council had not reached a decision when the arrival of Cortés was announced at the head of his cavalry. Attacked by a body of several thousand Indians, he sent back a horseman to make the infantry hurry up to his assistance. Two of the horses were killed, a loss seriously felt by Cortés; but when the main body had discharged a volley from their muskets and crossbows, so astounded were the Tlascalan Indians that they stopped fighting and withdrew from the field.

Next morning, after Cortés had given careful instruction to his army (now more than 3,000 in number, with his Indian auxiliaries), they had not marched far when they were met by two of the Zempoallans, who had been sent as ambassadors. They informed Cortés that, as captives, they had been reserved for the sacrificial stone, but had succeeded in breaking out of prison. They also said that forces were being collected from all quarters to meet the Spaniards.

At the first encounter, the Indians, after some spirited fighting, retreated in order to draw the Spanish army into a defile impracticable for artillery or cavalry. Pressing forward they found, on turning an abrupt corner of the glen, that an army of many thousands was drawn up in order, prepared to receive them. As they came into view, the Tlascalans set up a piercing war-cry, shrill and hideous, accompanied by the melancholy beat of a thousand drums. Cortés spurred on the cavalry to force a passage for the infantry,

and kept exhorting his soldiers, while showing them an example of personal daring. "If we fail now," he cried, "the Cross of Christ can never be planted in this land. Forward, comrades! when was it ever known that a Castilian turned his back on a foe?"

With desperate efforts the soldiers forced a passage through the Indian columns, and then, as soon as the horse opened room for the movements of the gunners, the terrible "thunder and lightning" of the cannon did the rest. The havoc caused in their ranks, combined with the roar and the flash of gunpowder, and the mangled carcasses, filled the whole of the barbarian army with horror and consternation. Eight leaders of the Tlascalan army having fallen, the prince ordered a retreat.

The chief of the Tlascalans, Xicotencatl, was no ordinary leader. When Cortés wished to press on to the capital, he sent two envoys to the Tlascalan camp, but all that Xicotencatl deigned to reply was

> that the Spaniards might pass on as soon as they chose to Tlascala, and when they reached it their flesh would be hewn from their bodies for sacrifice to the gods. If they preferred to remain in their own quarters, he would pay them a visit there the next day.

The envoys also told Cortés that the chief had now collected another very large army, five battalions of 10,000 men each. There was evidently a determination to try the fate of Tlascala by a pitched battle and exterminate the bold invaders.

The next day, September 5, 1519, was there-

fore a critical one in the annals of Cortés. He resolved to meet the Tlascalan chief in the field, after directing the foot-soldiers to use the point of their swords and not the edge; the horse to charge at half speed, directing their lances at the eyes of their enemies; the gunners and cross-bowmen to support each other, some loading while others were discharging their pieces.

Before Cortés and his soldiers had marched a mile they saw the immense Tlascalan army stretched far and wide over a vast plain. "Nothing could be more picturesque than the aspect of these Indian battalions, with the naked bodies of the common soldiers gaudily painted, the fantastic helmets of the chiefs bright with ornaments and precious stones, and the glowing panoplies of feather-work. . . .

> The golden glitterance and the feather-mail
> More gay than glittering gold; and round the helm
> A coronal of high upstanding plumes. . . .
> . . . With war-songs and wild music they came on.*

The Tlascalan warriors had attained wonderful skill in throwing the javelin. "One species, with a thong attached to it, which remained in the slinger's hand, that he might recall the weapon, was especially dreaded by the Spaniards." Their various weapons were pointed with bone or obsidian, and sometimes headed with copper.

The yell or scream of defiance raised by these Indians almost drowned the volume of sound from "the wild barbaric minstrelsy of shell, atabal, and trumpet with which they proclaimed

* Southey (Madoc, i, 7).

their triumphant anticipations of victory over the paltry forces of the invaders."

Advancing under a thick shower of arrows and other missiles, the Spanish soldiers at a certain distance quickly halted and drew up in order, before delivering a general fire along the whole line. The front ranks of their wild opponents were mowed down and those behind were "petrified with dismay."

But for the accident of dissension having arisen between the chiefs of the Tlascalans, it almost seemed as if nothing could have saved Cortés and his Spanish army. Before the battle, the haughty treatment of one of those chiefs by Xicotencatl, the cazique, provoked the injured man to draw off all his contingent during the battle, and persuade another chief to do the same. With his forces so weakened, the cazique was compelled to resign the field to the Spaniards.

Xicotencatl, in his eagerness for revenge, consulted some of the Aztec priests, who recommended a night attack upon Cortés's camp in order to take his army by surprise. The Tlascalan, therefore, with 10,000 warriors, marched secretly toward the Spanish camp, but owing to the bright moonlight they were not unseen by the vedettes. Besides that, Cortés had accustomed his army to sleep with their arms by their side and the horses ready saddled. In an instant, as it were, the whole camp were on the alert and under arms. The Indians, meanwhile, were stealthily advancing to the silent camp, and, "no sooner had they reached the slope of the rising ground than they were astounded by the deep battle-cry of the Spaniards, followed by the in-

stantaneous appearance of the whole army. Scarcely awaiting the shock of their enemy, the panic-struck barbarians fled rapidly and tumultuously across the plain. The horse easily overtook the fugitives, riding them down, and cutting them to pieces without mercy." Next day Cortés sent new ambassadors to the Tlascalan capital, accompanied by his faithful slave interpreter, Marina. They found the cazique's council sad and dejected, every gleam of hope being now extinguished.

The message of Cortés still promised friendship and pardon, if only they agreed to act as allies. If the present offer were rejected, "he would visit their capital as a conqueror, raze every house to the ground, and put every inhabitant to the sword." On hearing this ultimatum, the council chose four leading chiefs to be entrusted with a mission to Cortés, "assuring him of a free passage through the country, and a friendly reception in the capital." The ambassadors, on their way back to Cortés, called at the camp of Xicotencatl, and were there detained by him. He was still planning against the terrible invaders.

Cortés, in the meantime, had another opportunity of showing his resource and presence of mind. Some of his soldiers had shown a grumbling discontent: "The idea of conquering Mexico was madness; if they had encountered such opposition from the petty republic, what might they not expect from the great Mexican Empire? There was now a temporary suspension of hostilities; should they not avail themselves of it to retrace their steps to Vera Cruz?" To this Cortés

listened calmly and politely, replying that "he had told them at the outset that glory was to be won only by toil and danger; he had never shrunk from his share of both. To go back now was impossible. What would the Tlascalans say? How would the Mexicans exult at such a miserable issue! Instead of turning your eyes toward Cuba, fix them on Mexico, the great object of our enterprise." Many other soldiers having gathered round, the mutinous party took courage to say that "another such victory as the last would be their ruin; they were going to Mexico only to be slaughtered." With some impatience Cortés gaily quoted a soldiers' song:

> Better die with honor
> Than live in long disgrace!

—a sentiment which the majority of the audience naturally cheered to the echo, while the malcontents slunk away to their quarters.

The next event was the arrival of some Tlascalans wearing white badges as an indication of peace. They brought a message, they said, from Xicotencatl, who now desired an arrangement with Cortés, and would soon appear in person. Most of them remained in the camp, where they were treated kindly; but Marina, with her "woman's wit," became somewhat suspicious of them. Perhaps some of them, forgetting that she knew their language, let drop a phrase in talking to each other, which awoke her distrust. She told Cortés that the men were spies. He had them arrested and examined separately, ascertaining in that way that they were sent to

obtain secret information of the Spanish camp, and that, in fact, Xicotencatl was mustering his forces to make another determined attack on the invading army.

To show the fierceness of his resentment at such treatment, Cortés ordered the fifty spy ambassadors to have their hands hacked off, and sent back to tell their lord that "the Tlascalans might come by day or night, they would find the Spaniards ready for them." The sight of their mutilated comrades filled the Indian camp with dread and horror. All thoughts of resistance to the advance of Cortés were now abandoned, and not long after the arrival of Xicotencatl himself was announced, attended by a numerous train. He advanced with "the firm and fearless step of one who was coming rather to bid defiance than to sue for peace. He was rather above the middle size, with broad shoulders and a muscular frame, intimating great activity and strength. He made the usual salutation by touching the ground with his hand and carrying it to his head." He threw no blame on the Tlascalan senate, but assumed all the responsibility of the war. He admitted that the Spanish army had beaten him, but hoped they would use their victory with moderation, and not trample on the liberties of the republic.

Cortés admired the cazique's lofty spirit, while pretending to rebuke him for having so long remained an enemy. "He was willing to bury the past in oblivion, and to receive the Tlascalans as vassals to the Emperor, his master."

Before the entry into Tlascala, the capital, there arrived an embassy from Montezuma, who

had been keenly disappointed, no doubt, that Cortés had not only not been defeated by the bravest race on the Mexican table-land, but had formed a friendly alliance with them.

As Cortés, with his army, approached the populous city, they were welcomed by great crowds of men and women in picturesque dresses, with nosegays and wreaths of flowers; priests in white robes and long matted tresses, swinging their burning censers of incense. The anniversary of this entry into Tlascala, September 23, 1519, is still celebrated as a day of rejoicing.

Cortés, in his letter to the Emperor, King of Spain, compares it for size and appearance to Granada, the Moorish capital. Pottery was one of the industries in which Tlascala excelled. The Tlascalan was chiefly agricultural in his habits; his honest breast glowed with the patriotic attachment to the soil, which is the fruit of its diligent culture, while he was elevated by that consciousness of independence which is the natural birthright of a child of the mountains.

Cholula, capital of the republic of that name, is six leagues north of Tlascala, and about twenty southeast of Mexico. In the time of the conquest of the table-land of Anahuac, as the whole district is sometimes termed, this city was large and populous. The people excelled in mechanical arts, especially metal-working, cloth-weaving, and a delicate kind of pottery. Reference has already been made to the god Quetzalcoatl, in whose honor a huge pyramid was erected here. From the farthest parts of Anahuac devotees thronged to Cholula, just as the Mohammedans to Mecca.

The Spaniards found the people of Cholula superior in dress and looks to any of the races they had seen. The higher classes "wore fine embroidered mantles resembling the Moorish cloak in texture and fashion. . . . They showed the same delicate taste for flowers as the other tribes of the plateau, tossing garlands and bunches among the soldiers. . . . The Spaniards were also struck with the cleanliness of the city, the regularity of the streets, the solidity of the houses, and the number and size of the pyramidal temples." After being treated with kindness and hospitality for several days, all at once the scene changed, the cause being the arrival of messengers from Montezuma. At the same time some Tlascalans told Cortés that a great sacrifice, mostly of children, had been offered to propitiate the favor of the gods.

At this juncture, Marina, the Indian slave interpreter, again proved to be the "good angel" of Cortés. She had become very friendly with the wife of one of the Cholula caziques, who gave her a hint that there was danger in staying at the house of any Spaniard; and, when further pressed by Marina, said that the Spaniards were to be slaughtered when marching out of the capital. The plot had originated with the Aztec Emperor, and 20,000 Mexicans were already quartered a little distance out of town.

In this most critical position, Cortés at once decided to take possession of the great square, placing a strong guard at each of its three gates of entrance. The rest of what troops he had in the town, he posted without with the cannon, to command the avenues. He had already sent

orders to the Tlascalan chiefs to keep their soldiers in readiness to march, at a given signal, into the city to support the Spaniards. Presently the caziques of Cholula arrived with a larger body of levies than Cortés had demanded. He at once charged them with conspiring against the Spaniards after receiving them as friends. They were so amazed at his discovery of their perfidy that they confessed everything, laying the blame on Montezuma. "That pretense," said Cortés, assuming a look of fierce indignation, "is no justification; I shall now make such an example of you for your treachery that the report of it will ring throughout the wide borders of Anahuac!"

At the firing of a harquebus, the fatal signal, the crowd of unsuspecting Cholulans were massacred as they stood, almost without resistance. Meantime the other Indians without the square commenced an attack on the Spaniards, but the heavy guns of the battery played upon them with murderous effect, and cavalry advanced to support the attack.

The steeds, the guns, the weapons of the Spaniards, were all new to the Cholulans. Notwithstanding the novelty of the terrific spectacle, the flash of arms mingling with the deafening roar of the artillery, the desperate Indians pushed on to take the places of their fallen comrades.

While this scene of bloodshed was progressing, the Tlascalans, as arranged, were hastening to the assistance of their Spanish allies. The Cholulans, when thus attacked in rear by their traditional enemies, speedily gave way, and tried to save themselves in the great temple and else-

where. The "Holy City," as it was called, was converted into a pandemonium of massacre. In memory of the signal defeat of the Cholulans, Cortés converted the chief part of the great temple into a Christian church.

Envoys again arrived from Mexico with rich presents and a message vindicating the pusillanimous Emperor from any share in the conspiracy against Cortés. Continuing their march, the allied army of Spaniards and Tlascalans proceeded till they reached the mountains which separate the table-land of Puebla from that of Mexico. To cross this range they followed the route which passes between the mighty Popocatepetl (i. e., "the smoking mountain") and another called the "White Woman" from its broad robe of snow. The first lies about forty miles southeast of the capital to which their march was directed. It is more than 2,000 feet higher than Mont Blanc, and has two principal craters, one of which is about 1,000 feet deep and has large deposits of sulfur which are regularly mined. Popocatepetl has long been only a quiescent volcano, but during the invasion by Cortés it was often burning, especially at the time of the siege of Tlascala. That was naturally interpreted all over the district of Anahuac to be a bad omen, associated with the landing and approach of the Spaniards. Cortés insisted on several descents being made into the great crater till sufficient sulfur was collected to supply gunpowder to his army. The icy cold winds, varied by storms of snow and sleet, were more trying to the Europeans than the Tlascalans, but some relief was found in the stone shelters which had been built at

certain intervals along the roads for the accommodation of couriers and other travelers.

At last they reached the crest of the sierra which unites Popocatepetl, the "great *Volcan,*" to its sister mountain the "Woman in White." Soon after, at a turning of the road, the invaders enjoyed their first view of the famous Valley of Mexico or Tenochtitlan, with its beautiful lakes in their setting of cultivated plains, here and there varied by woods and forests. "In the midst, like some Indian empress with her coronal of pearls, the fair city with her white towers and pyramidal temples, reposing as it were on the bosom of the waters—the far-famed 'Venice of the Aztecs.'"

This view of the "Promised Land" will remind some of the picturesque account given by Livy (xxi, 35) of Hannibal reaching the top of the pass over the Alps and pointing out the fair prospect of Italy to his soldiers. We may thus render the passage: "On the ninth day the ridge of the Alps was reached, over ground generally trackless and by roundabout ways. . . . The order for marching being given at break of day, the army were sluggishly advancing over ground wholly covered with snow, listlessness, and despair depicted on the features of all, Hannibal went on in front, and after ordering the soldiers to halt on a height which commanded a distant view, far and wide, points out to them Italy and the plains of Lombardy on both banks of the Po, at the foot of the Alps, telling them that at that moment they were crossing not only the walls of Italy but of the Roman capital; that the rest of the march was easy and downhill." The situation of Hannibal

and his Carthaginians surveying Italy for the first time is in some respects closely analogous to that of Cortés pointing out the Valley of Mexico to his Spanish soldiers.

CHAPTER VII

CORTÉS AND MONTEZUMA

We have now seen the Spanish conquerors with a large contingent of 6,000 natives surmounting the mountains to the east of the Mexican Valley and looking down upon the Lake of Tezcuco on which were built the sister capitals. Montezuma, the Aztec monarch, was already in a state of dismay, and sent still another embassy to propitiate the terrible Cortés, with a great present of gold and robes of the most precious fabrics and workmanship; and a promise that, if the foreign general would turn back toward Vera Cruz, the Mexicans would pay down four loads of gold for himself and one to each of his captains, besides a yearly tribute to their king in Europe.

These promises did not reach Cortés till he was descending from the sierra. He replied that details were best arranged by a personal interview, and that the Spaniards came with peaceful motives.

Montezuma was now plunged in deep despair. At last he summoned a council to consult his nobles and especially his nephew, the young King

of Tezcuco, and his warlike brother. The latter advised him to "muster as large an army as possible, and drive back the invaders from his capital or die in its defense." "Ah!" replied the monarch, "the gods have declared themselves against us!" Still another embassy was prepared, with his nephew, lord of Tezcuco, at its head, to offer a welcome to the unwelcome visitors.

Cortés approached through fertile fields, plantations, and maguey-vineyards till they reached Lake Chalco. There they found a large town built in the water on piles, with canals instead of streets, full of movement and animation. "The Spaniards were particularly struck with the style and commodious structure of the houses, chiefly of stone, and with the general aspect of wealth and even elegance which prevailed."

Next morning the King of Tezcuco came to visit Cortés, in a palanquin richly decorated with plates of gold and precious stones, under a canopy of green plumes. He was accompanied by a numerous suite. Advancing with the Mexican salutation, he said he had been commanded by Montezuma to welcome him to the capital, at the same time offering three splendid pearls as a present. Cortés "in return threw over the young king's neck a chain of cut glass, which, where glass was as rare as diamonds, might be admitted to have a value as real as the latter."

The army of Cortés next marched along the southern side of Lake Chalco, "through noble woods and by orchards glowing with autumnal fruits, of unknown names, but rich and tempting hues." They also passed "through cultivated fields waving with the yellow harvest, and irri-

gated by canals introduced from the neighboring lake, the whole showing a careful and economical husbandry, essential to the maintenance of a crowded population." A remarkable public work next engaged the attention of the Spaniards, viz., a solid causeway of stone and lime running directly through the lake, in some places so wide that eight horsemen could ride on it abreast. Its length is some four or five miles. Marching along this causeway, they saw other wonders; numbers of the natives darting in all directions in their skiffs, curious to watch the strangers marching, and some of them bearing the products of the country to the neighboring cities. They were amazed also by the sight of the floating gardens, teeming with flowers and vegetables, and moving like rafts over the waters. All round the margin, and occasionally far in the lake, they beheld little towns and villages, which, half concealed by the foliage, and gathered in white clusters round the shore, "looked in the distance like companies of white swans riding quietly on the waves." About the middle of this lake was a town, to which the Spaniards gave the name of Venezuela * (i. e., "Little Venice"). From its situation and the style of the buildings, Cortés called it the most beautiful town that he had yet seen in New Spain.

After crossing the isthmus which separates that lake from Lake Tezcuco they were now at Iztapalapan, a royal residence in charge of the Emperor's brother. Here a ceremonious recep-

* Not to be confounded with the Indian village on the shore of Lake Maracaibo, to which (with similar motive) Vespucci had given that name—now capital of a large republic.

tion was given to Cortés and his staff, "a collation being served in one of the great halls of the palace. The excellence of the architecture here excited the admiration of the general. The buildings were of stone, and the spacious apartments had roofs of odorous cedar-wood, while the walls were tapestried with fine cotton stained with brilliant colors.

"But the pride of Iztapalapan was its celebrated gardens, covering an immense tract of land and laid out in regular squares. The gardens were stocked with fruit-trees and with the gaudy family of flowers which belonged to the Mexican flora, scientifically arranged, and growing luxuriant in the equable temperature of the table-land. In one quarter was an aviary filled with numerous kinds of birds remarkable in this region both for brilliancy of plumage and for song. But the most elaborate piece of work was a huge reservoir of stone, filled to a considerable height with water, well supplied with different sorts of fish. This basin was 1,600 paces in circumference, and surrounded by a walk."

Readers must remember that at that age no beautiful gardens on a large scale were known in any part of Europe. The first "garden of plants" (to use the name afterward applied by the French) is said to have been an Italian one, at Padua, in 1545, a whole generation after the time of the arrival of Cortés in Mexico. It was only under Louis "Le Magnifique" that France created the Versailles Gardens, and not till the time of George III and his tutor Bute could we boast of the gardens at Kew, now admired by all the world. The ancient Mexicans, therefore, under

their extinct civilization, had developed this taste for the beautiful many ages before the most cultivated races in Europe.

Cortés took up his quarters at this residence of Iztapalapan for the night, expecting to meet Montezuma on the morrow. Mexico was now distinctly full in view, looking "like a thing of fairy creation," a city of enchantment.

> There Aztlan stood upon the farther shore;
> Amid the shade of trees its dwellings rose,
> Their level roofs with turrets set around
> And battlements all burnished white, which shone
> Like silver in the sunshine. I beheld
> The imperial city, her far-circling walls,
> Her garden groves and stately palaces,
> Her temples mountain size, her thousand roofs,
> And when I saw her might and majesty
> My mind misgave me then.
>
> *Madoc*, i, 6.

That following day, November 8, 1519, should be noted in every calendar, when the great capital of the Western World admitted the conquering general from the Eastern World. The invaders were now upon a larger causeway, which stretched across the salt waters of Lake Tezcuco; and "had occasion more than ever to admire the mechanical science of the Aztecs." It was wide enough throughout its whole extent for ten horsemen to ride abreast.

The Spaniards saw everywhere "evidence of a crowded and thriving population, exceeding all they had yet seen." The water was darkened by swarms of canoes filled with Indians; and here also were those fairy islands of flowers. Half

a league from the capital they encountered a solid work of stone, which traversed the road. It was twelve feet high, strengthened by towers at the extremities, and in the center was a battlemented gateway, which opened a passage to the troops.

Here they were met by several hundred Aztec chiefs, who came out to announce the approach of Montezuma, and to welcome the Spaniards to his capital. They were dressed in the fanciful gala costume of the country, with the cotton sash around their loins, and a broad mantle of the same material, or of the brilliant feather embroidery, flowing gracefully down their shoulders. On their necks and arms they displayed collars and bracelets of turquoise mosaic, with which delicate plumage was curiously mingled, while their ears, under lips, and occasionally their noses were garnished with pendants formed of precious stones, or crescents of fine gold.

After all the caziques had performed the same formal salutation separately, there was no further delay till they reached a bridge near the gates of the capital. Soon after "they beheld the glittering retinue of the Emperor emerging from the great street leading through the heart of the city. Amid a crowd of Indian nobles preceded by three officers of state bearing golden wands, they saw the royal palanquin blazing with burnished gold. It was borne on the shoulders of nobles, and over it a canopy of gaudy feather-work, covered with jewels and fringed with silver, was supported by four attendants of the same rank."

At a certain distance from the Spaniards "the train halted, and Montezuma, descending from

the litter, came forward, leaning on the arms of the lords of Tezcuco and Iztapalapan"—the Emperor's nephew and brother, already mentioned. "As the monarch advanced, his subjects, who lined the sides of the causeway, bent forward, with their eyes fastened on the ground, as he passed."

Montezuma wore the ample square cloak common to the Mexicans, but of the finest cotton sprinkled with pearls and precious stones; his sandals were similarly sprinkled, and had soles of solid gold. His only head ornament was a bunch of feathers of the royal green color. A man about forty; tall and rather thin; black hair, cut rather short for a person of rank; dignified in his movements; his features wearing an expression of benignity not to be expected from his character.

After dismounting from horseback, Cortés advanced to meet Montezuma, who received him with princely courtesy, while Cortés responded by profound expressions of respect, with thanks for his experience of the Emperor's munificence. He then hung round Montezuma's neck a sparkling chain of colored crystal, accompanying this with a movement as if to embrace him, when he was restrained by the two Aztec lords, shocked at the menaced profanation of the sacred person of their monarch and master.

Montezuma appointed his brother to conduct the Spaniards to their residence in the capital, and was again carried through the adoring crowds in his litter. "The Spaniards quickly followed, and with colors flying and music playing soon made their entrance into the southern quarter."

On entering "they found fresh cause for admiration in the grandeur of the city and the

superior style of its architecture. The great avenue through which they were now marching was lined with the houses of the nobles, who were encouraged by the Emperor to make the capital their residence. The flat roofs were protected by stone parapets, so that every house was a fortress. Sometimes these roofs seemed parterres of flowers . . . broad terraced gardens laid out between the buildings. Occasionally a great square intervened surrounded by its porticoes of stone and stucco; or a pyramidal temple reared its colossal bulk crowned with its tapering sanctuaries, and altars blazing with unextinguishable fires. But what most impressed the Spaniards was the throngs of people who swarmed through the streets and on the canals."

Probably, however, the spectacle of the European army with their horses, their guns, bright swords and helmets of steel, a metal to them unknown; their weird and mysterious music—the whole formed to the Aztec populace an inexplicable wonder, combined with those foreigners who had arrived from the distant East, "revealing their celestial origin in their fair complexions." Many of the Aztec citizens betrayed keen hatred of the Tlascalans who marched with the Spaniards in friendly alliance.

At length Cortés with his mixed army halted near the center of the city in a great open space, "where rose the huge pyramidal pile dedicated to the patron war-god of the Aztecs, second only to the temple of Cholula in size as well as sanctity." The present famous cathedral of modern Mexico is built on part of the same site.

A palace built opposite the west side of the

great temple was assigned to Cortés. It was extensive enough to accommodate the whole of the army of Cortés. Montezuma paid him a visit there, having a long conversation through the indispensable assistance of Marina, the slave interpreter. "That evening the Spaniards celebrated their arrival in the Mexican capital by a general discharge of artillery. The thunders of the ordnance reverberating among the buildings and shaking them to their foundations, the stench of the sulfureous vapor reminding the inhabitants of the explosions of the great volcano (Popocatepetl) filled the hearts of the superstitious Aztecs with dismay."

Next day Cortés had gracious permission to return the visit of the Emperor, and therefore proceeded to wait upon him at the royal palace, dressed in his richest suit of clothes. The Spanish general felt the importance of the occasion and resolved to exercise all his eloquence and power of argument in attempting the "conversion" of Montezuma to the Christian faith.

For this purpose, with the assistance of the faithful Marina, Cortés engaged the Emperor in a theological discussion; explaining the creation of the world as taught in the Jewish Scriptures; the fall of man from his first happy and holy condition by the temptation of Satan; the mysterious redemption of the human race by the incarnation and atonement of the Son of God Himself. "He assured Montezuma that the idols worshiped in Mexico were Satan under different forms. A sufficient proof of this was the bloody sacrifices they imposed, which he contrasted with the pure and simple rite of the mass. It was to snatch the

Emperor's soul and the souls of his people from the flames of eternal fire that the Christians had come to this land."

Montezuma replied that the God of the Spaniards must be a good being, and "my gods also are good to me; there was no need to further discourse on the matter." If he had "resisted their visit to his capital, it was because he had heard such accounts of their cruelties—that they sent the lightning to consume his people, or crushed them to pieces under the hard feet of the ferocious animals on which they rode. He was now convinced that these were idle tales; that the Spaniards were kind and generous in their nature." He concluded by admitting the superiority of the sovereign of Cortés beyond the seas. "Your sovereign is the rightful lord of all: I rule in his name."

The rough Spanish cavaliers were touched by the kindness and affability of Montezuma. As they passed him, says Diaz, in his History, they made him the most profound obeisance, hat in hand; and on the way home could discourse of nothing but the gentle breeding and courtesy of the Indian monarch.

MONTEZUMA'S CAPITAL

Cortés and his army being now fairly domesticated in Mexico, and the Emperor having apparently become reconciled to the presence of his formidable guests, we may pause to consider the surroundings.

The present capital occupies the site of Tenochtitlan, but many changes have occurred in the

intervening four centuries. First of all, the salt waters of the great lake have entirely shrunk away, leaving modern Mexico high and dry, a league away from the waters that Cortés saw flowing in ample canals through all the streets. Formerly the houses stood on elevated piles and were independent of the floods which rose in Lake Tezcuco by the overflowing of other lakes on a higher level. But when the foundations were on solid ground it became necessary to provide against the accumulated volume of water by excavating a tunnel to drain off the flood. This was constructed about one hundred years after the invasion of the Spaniards, and has been described by Humboldt as "one of the most stupendous hydraulic works in existence."

The appearance of the lake and suburbs of the capital have long lost much of the attractive appearance they had at the time of the Spanish visit; but the town itself is still the most brilliant city in Spanish America, surmounted by a cathedral, which forms "the most sumptuous house of worship in the New World."

The great causeway already described as leading north from the royal city of Iztapalapan, had another to the north of the capital, which might be called its continuation. The third causeway, leading west to the town Tacuba from the island city, will be noticed presently as the scene of the Spaniards' retreat.

There were excellent police regulations for health and cleanliness. Water supplied by earthen pipes was from a hill about two miles distant. Besides the palaces and temples there were several important buildings: an armory

filled with weapons and military dresses; a granary; various warehouses; an immense aviary, with "birds of splendid plumage assembled from all parts of the empire—the scarlet cardinal, the golden pheasant, the endless parrot tribe, and that miniature miracle of nature, the humming-bird, which delights to revel among the honeysuckle bowers of Mexico." The birds of prey had a separate building. The menagerie adjoining the aviary showed wild animals from the mountain forests, as well as creatures from the remote swamps of the hot lands by the seashore. The serpents "were confined in long cages lined with down or feathers, or in troughs of mud and water."

Wishing to visit the great Mexican temple, Cortés, with his cavalry and most of his infantry, followed the caziques whom Montezuma had politely sent as guides.

On their way to the central square the Spaniards "were struck with the appearance of the inhabitants, and their great superiority in the style and quality of their dress over the people of the lower countries. The women, as in other parts of the country, seemed to go about as freely as the men. They wore several skirts or petticoats of different lengths, with highly ornamented borders, and sometimes over them loose-flowing robes, which reached to the ankles. No veils were worn here as in some other parts of Anahuac. The Aztec women had their faces exposed; and their dark raven tresses floated luxuriantly over their shoulders, revealing features which, although of a dusky or rather cinnamon hue, were not unfrequently pleasing, while

touched with the serious, even sad expression characteristic of the national physiognomy."

When near the great market "the Spaniards were astonished at the throng of people pressing toward it, and on entering the place their surprise was still further heightened by the sight of the multitudes assembled there, and the dimensions of the enclosure, twice as large, says one Spanish observer, as the celebrated square of Salamanca. Here were traders from all parts; the goldsmiths from Azcapozalco, the potters and jewelers of Cholula, the painters of Tezcuco, the stone-cutters, hunters, fishermen, fruiterers, mat and chair makers, florists, etc. The pottery department was a large one; so were the armories for implements of war; razors and mirrors—booths for apothecaries with drugs, roots, and medical preparations. In other places again, blank-books or maps for the hieroglyphics or pictographs were to be seen folded together like fans. Animals both wild and tame were offered for sale, and near them, perhaps, a gang of slaves with collars round their necks. One of the most attractive features of the market was the display of provisions: meats of all kinds, domestic poultry, game from the neighboring mountains, fish from the lakes and streams, fruits in all the delicious abundance of these temperate regions, green vegetables, and the unfailing maize."

This market, like hundreds of smaller ones, was of course held every fifth day—the week of the ancient Mexicans being one-fourth of the twenty days which constituted the Aztec month. This great market was comparable to "the periodical fairs in Europe, not as they now exist, but as

they existed in the middle ages," when from the difficulties of intercommunication they served as the great central marts for commercial intercourse, exercising a most important and salutary influence on the community.

One of the Spaniards in the party accompanying Cortés was the historian Diaz, and his testimony is remarkable:

> There were among us soldiers who had been in many parts of the world, Constantinople and Rome, and through all Italy, and who said that a market-place so large, so well ordered and regulated, and so filled with people, they had never seen.

Proceeding next to the great *teocalli* or Aztec temple, covering the site of the modern cathedral with part of the market-place and some adjoining streets, they found it in the midst of a great open space, surrounded by a high stone wall, ornamented on the outside by figures of serpents raised in relief, and pierced by huge battlemented gateways opening on the four principal streets of the capital. The *teocalli* itself was a solid pyramidal structure of earth and pebbles, coated on the outside with hewn stones, the sides facing the cardinal points. It was divided into five stories, each of smaller dimensions than that immediately below. The ascent was by a flight of steps on the outside, which reached to the narrow terrace at the bottom of the second story, passing quite round the building, when a second stairway conducted to a similar landing at the base of the third. Thus the visitor was obliged to pass round the whole edifice four times in order to reach the top. This had a most imposing effect

in the religious ceremonials, when the pompous procession of priests with their wild minstrelsy came sweeping round the huge sides of the pyramid, as they rose higher and higher toward the summit in full view of the populace assembled in their thousands.

Cortés marched up the steps at the head of his men, and found at the summit "a vast area paved with broad flat stones. The first object that met their view was a large block of jasper, the peculiar shape of which showed it was the stone on which the bodies of the unhappy victims were stretched for sacrifice. Its convex surface, by raising the breast, enabled the priest to perform more easily his diabolical task of removing the heart. At the other end of the area were two towers or sanctuaries, consisting of three stories, the lower one of stone, the two upper of wood elaborately carved. In the lower division stood the images of their gods; the apartments above were filled with utensils for their religious services, and with the ashes of some of their Aztec princes who had fancied this airy sepulcher. Before each sanctuary stood an altar, with that undying fire upon it, the extinction of which boded as much evil to the empire as that of the Vestal flame would have done in ancient Rome. Here also was the huge cylindrical drum made of serpents' skins, and struck only on extraordinary occasions, when it sent forth a melancholy, weird sound, that might be heard for miles" over the country, indicating fierce anger of deity against the enemies of Mexico.

As Cortés reached the summit he was met by the Emperor himself attended by the high priest.

Taking the general by the hand, Montezuma pointed out the chief localities in the wide prospect which their position commanded, including not only the capital, "bathed on all sides by the salt floods of the Tezcuco, and in the distance the clear fresh waters of Lake Chalco," but the whole of the Valley of Mexico to the base of the circular range of mountains, and the wreaths of vapor rolling up from the hoary head of Popocatepetl.

Cortés was allowed "to behold the shrines of the gods. They found themselves in a spacious apartment, with sculptures on the walls, representing the Mexican calendar, or the priestly ritual. Before the altar in this sanctuary stood the colossal image of Huitzilopochtli, the tutelary deity and war-god of the Aztecs. His countenance was distorted into hideous lineaments of symbolical import. The huge folds of a serpent, consisting of pearls and precious stones, were coiled round his waist, and the same rich materials were profusely sprinkled over his person. On his left foot were the delicate feathers of the humming-bird, which gave its name to the dread deity. The most conspicuous ornament was a chain of gold and silver hearts alternate, suspended round his neck, emblematical of the sacrifice in which he most delighted. A more unequivocal evidence of this was afforded by three human hearts that now lay smoking on the altar before him.

"The adjoining sanctuary was dedicated to a milder deity. This was Tezcatlipoca, who created the world, next in honor to that invisible being the Supreme God, who was represented by no

image, and confined by no temple. He was represented as a young man, and his image of polished black stone was richly garnished with gold plates and ornaments. But the homage to this god was not always of a more refined or merciful character than that paid to his carnivorous brother."

According to Diaz, whom we have already quoted, the stench of human gore in both those chapels was more intolerable than that of all the slaughter-houses in Castile. Glad to escape into the open air, Cortés expressed wonder that a great and wise prince like Montezuma could have faith "in such evil spirits as these idols, the representatives of the devil! Permit us to erect here the true cross, and place the images of the Blessed Virgin and her Son in these sanctuaries; you will soon see how your false gods will shrink before them!"

This extraordinary speech of the general shocked Montezuma, who, in reproof, said: "Had I thought you would have offered this outrage to the gods of the Aztecs, I would not have admitted you into their presence."

Cortés, as a general, had some of the great qualities of Napoleon, but he also resembled him occasionally in a singular lack of delicacy and good taste. We do not, however, find that he ever showed such mean malignity as the French general did when persecuting Madame de Staël, because in her Germany she had omitted to mention his campaigns and administration.

Within the same enclosure, Cortés and his companions visited a temple dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, a god referred to already. Other build-

ings served as seminaries for the instruction of youth of both sexes; and according to the Spanish accounts of the teaching and management of these institutions there was "the greatest care for morals and the most blameless deportment."

SEIZURE OF MONTEZUMA

After being guest of the Mexican Emperor for a week, Cortés resolved to carry out a most daring and unprecedented scheme — a purely "Napoleonic movement," such as could scarcely have entered the brain of any general ancient or modern. He argued with himself that a quarrel might at any moment break out between his men and the citizens; the Spaniards again could not remain long quiet unless actively employed; and, thirdly, there was still greater danger with the Tlascalans, "a fierce race now in daily contact with a nation that regards them with loathing and detestation." Lastly, the Governor of Cuba, already grossly offended with Cortés, might at any moment send after him a sufficient army to wrest from him the glory of conquest. Cortés therefore formed the daring resolve to seize Montezuma in his palace and carry him as a prisoner to the Spanish quarters. He hoped thus to have in his own hands the supreme management of affairs, and at the same time secure his own safety with such a "sacred pledge" in keeping.

It was necessary to find a pretext for seizing the hospitable Montezuma. News had already come to Cortés, when at Cholula, that Escalante, whom he had left in charge of Vera Cruz, had been defeated by the Aztecs in a pitched bat-

tle, and that the head of a Spaniard, then slain, had been sent to the Emperor, after being shown in triumph throughout some of the chief cities.

Cortés asked an audience from Montezuma, and that being readily granted, he prepared for his plot by having a large body of armed men posted in the courtyard. Choosing five companions of tried courage, Cortés then entered the palace, and after being graciously received, told Montezuma that he knew of the treachery that had taken place near the coast, and that the Emperor was said to be the cause.

The Emperor said that such a charge could only have been concocted by his enemies. He agreed with the proposal of Cortés to summon the Aztec chief who was accused of treachery to the garrison at Vera Cruz; and was then persuaded to transfer his residence to the palace occupied by the Spaniards. He was there received and treated with ostentatious respect; but his people observed that in front of the palace there was constantly posted a patrol of sixty soldiers, with another equally large in the rear.

When the Aztec chief arrived from the coast, he and his sixteen Aztec companions were condemned to be burned alive before the palace.

The next daring act of the Spanish general was to order iron fetters to be fastened on Montezuma's ankles. The great Emperor seemed struck with stupor and spoke never a word. Meanwhile the Aztec chiefs were executed in the courtyard without interruption, the populace imagining the sentence had been passed upon them by Montezuma, and the victims submitting to their fate without a murmur.

Cortés returning then to the room where Montezuma was imprisoned, unclasped the fetters and said he was now at liberty to return to his own palace. The Emperor, however, declined the offer.

The instinctive sense of human sympathy must have frequently been not only repressed but extinguished by all the great conquering generals who have crushed nations under foot. Besides those of prehistoric times in Asia and Europe, we have examples in Alexander the Greek, Julius Cæsar the Roman, Cortés and Pizarro the Spaniards, Frederick the Prussian, and Napoleon the Corsican.

The great French general consciously aimed at dramatic effect in his exploits, but how paltry his seizing the Duc d'Enghien at dead of night by a troop of soldiers, or his coercing the King of Spain to resign his sovereignty after inducing him to cross the border into France. In the unparalleled case of Cortés, a powerful emperor is seized by a few strangers at noonday and carried off a prisoner without opposition or bloodshed. So extraordinary a transaction, says Robertson, would appear "extravagant beyond the bounds of probability" were it not that all the circumstances are "authenticated by the most unquestionable evidence."

The nephew of Montezuma, Cakama, the lord of Tezcuco, had been closely watching all the motions of the Spaniards. He "beheld with indignation and contempt the abject condition of his uncle; and now set about forming a league with several of the neighboring caziques to break the detested yoke of the Spaniards." News of this

league reached the ears of Cortés, and arresting him with the permission of Montezuma, he deposed him, and appointed a younger brother in his place. The other caziques were seized, each in his own city, and brought to Mexico, where Cortés placed them in strict confinement along with Cakama.

The next step taken by Cortés was to demand from Montezuma an acknowledgment of the supremacy of the Spanish Emperor. The Aztec monarch and chief caziques easily granted this; and even agreed that a gratuity should be sent by each of them as proof of loyalty. Collectors were sent out, and "in a few weeks most of them returned, bringing back large quantities of gold and silver plate, rich stuffs, etc." To this Montezuma added a huge hoard, the treasures of his father. When brought into the quarters, the gold alone was sufficient to make three great heaps. It consisted partly of native grains, and partly of bars; but the greatest portion was in utensils, and various kinds of ornaments and curious toys, together with imitations of birds, insects, or flowers, executed with uncommon truth and delicacy. There were also quantities of collars, bracelets, wands, fans, and other trinkets, in which the gold and feather-work were richly powdered with pearls and precious stones. Montezuma expressed regret that the treasure was no larger; he had "diminished it," he said, "by his former gifts to the white men."

The Spaniards gazed on this display of riches, far exceeding all hitherto seen in the New World —though small compared with the quantity of treasure found in Peru. The whole amount of

this Mexican gift was about £1,417,000, according to Prescott, Dr. Robertson making it smaller.

It was no easy task to divide the spoil. A fifth had to be deducted for the Crown, and an equal share went to the general, besides a "large sum to indemnify him and the Governor of Cuba for the charges of the expedition and the loss of the fleet. The garrison of Vera Cruz was also to be provided for. The cavalry, musketeers, and crossbowmen each received double pay." Thus for each of the common soldiers there was only 100 gold *pesos*—i. e., £2⅝ × 100 = £262 10s. To many this share seemed paltry, compared with their expectations; and it required all the tact and authority of Cortés to quell the grumbling.

There still remained one important object of the Spanish invasion, an object which Cortés as a good Catholic dared not overlook—the conversion of the Aztec nation from heathenism. The bloody ritual of the *teocallis* was still observed in every city. Cortés waited on Montezuma, urging a request that the great temple be assigned for public worship according to the Christian rites.

Montezuma was evidently much alarmed, declaring that his people would never allow such a profanation, but at last, after consulting the priest, agreed that one of the sanctuaries on the summit of the temple should be granted to the Christians as a place of worship.

An altar was raised, surmounted by a crucifix and the image of the Virgin. The whole army ascended the steps in solemn procession and listened with silent reverence to the service of the mass. In conclusion, "as the beautiful Te Deum rose toward heaven, Cortés and his sol-

diers kneeling on the ground, with tears streaming from their eyes, poured forth their gratitude to the Almighty for this glorious triumph of the cross." Such a union of heathenism and Christianity was too unnatural to continue.

A few days later the Emperor sent for Cortés and earnestly advised him to leave the country at once. Cortés replied that ships were necessary. Montezuma agreed to supply timber and workmen, and in a short time the construction of several ships was begun at Vera Cruz on the seacoast, while in the capital the garrison kept itself ready by day and by night for a hostile attack. Only six months had elapsed since the arrival of the Spaniards in the capital, 1519, and now the army was in more uncomfortable circumstances than ever.

Meanwhile, while Cortés had been reducing Mexico and humbling the unfortunate Montezuma, the Governor of Cuba had complained to the court of Spain, but without success. Charles V, since his election to the imperial crown of Germany, had neglected the affairs of Spain; and when the envoys from Vera Cruz waited upon him, little came of the conference except the astonishment of the court at the quantity of gold, and the beautiful workmanship of the ornaments and the rich colors of the Mexican featherwork. The opposition of the Bishop of Burgos thwarted the conqueror of Mexico, as he had already successfully opposed the schemes of the "Great Admiral" and his son Diego Columbus. We shall presently see how this influential ecclesiastic was able to thwart Balboa when governor of Darien.

Velasquez was now determined to wreak his revenge upon Cortés without waiting longer for assistance from Spain. He prepared an expedition of eighteen ships with eighty horsemen, 800 infantry, 120 crossbowmen, and twelve pieces of artillery. To command these Velasquez chose a hidalgo named Narvaez, who had assisted formerly in subduing Cuba and Hispaniola. The personal appearance of Narvaez, as given by Diaz, is worth quoting:

> He was tall, stout-limbed, with a large head and red beard, an agreeable presence, a voice deep and sonorous, as if it rose from a cavern. He was a good horseman and valiant.

Meanwhile Cortés persuaded Montezuma that some friends from Spain had arrived at Vera Cruz, and therefore got permission to leave him and the capital in charge of Alvarado and a small garrison. Montezuma, in his royal litter, borne on the shoulders of his Aztec nobles, accompanied the Spanish general to the southern causeway.

When Cortés was within fifteen leagues' distance of Zempoalla, where Narvaez was encamped, the latter sent a message that if his authority were acknowledged he would supply ships to Cortés and his army so that all who wished might freely leave the country with all their property.

Cortés, however, with his usual astuteness, replied: "If Narvaez bears a royal commission I will readily submit to him. But he has produced none. He is a deputy of my rival, Velasquez. For myself, I am a servant of the King; I have

conquered the country for him; and for him I and my brave followers will defend it to the last drop of our blood. If we fall it will be glory enough to have perished in the discharge of our duty."

Narvaez and his army were meantime spending their time frivolously; and when the actual attack was begun in the dead of night, under a pouring rain-storm, it appeared that only two sentinels were on guard. Narvaez, badly wounded, was taken prisoner on the top of a *teocalli*; and in a very short time his army was glad to capitulate. The horse-soldiers whom Narvaez had sent to waylay one of the roads to Zempoalla, rode in soon after to tender their submission. The victorious general, seated in a chair of state, with a richly embroidered Mexican mantle on his shoulders, received his congratulations from the officers and soldiers of both armies. Narvaez and several others were led in chains.

Cortés not only defeated Narvaez, but, after the battle, enlisted under his standard the Spanish soldiers who had been sent to attack him—reminding one of the "magnetism" of Hannibal or Napoleon, and the consequent enthusiasm caused by mere presence, looks, and words.

Before the rejoicings were finished, however, tidings were brought to Cortés from the Mexican capital that the whole city was in a state of revolt against Alvarado. On his march back to the great plateau Cortés found the inhabitants of Tlascala still friendly and willing to assist as allies in the struggle against their ancient foes, the Mexicans. On reaching the camp of the Spaniards in Mexico, Cortés found that Alvarado had

provoked the insurrection by a massacre of the Aztec populace.

Having entered the precincts with his army, Cortés at once made anxious preparations for the siege which was threatened by the Aztecs, now assembling in thousands.

As the assailants approached "they set up a hideous yell, or rather that shrill whistle used in fight by the nations of Anahuac," accompanied by the sound of shell and atabal and their other rude instruments of wild music. This was followed by a tempest of missiles, stones, darts, and arrows. The Spaniards waited until the foremost column had arrived within distance, when a general discharge of artillery and muskets swept the ranks of the assailants. Never till now had the Mexicans witnessed the murderous power of these formidable engines. At first they stood aghast, but soon rallying, they rushed forward over the prostrate bodies of their comrades.

Pressing on, some of them tried to scale the parapet, while others tried to force a breach in it. When the parapet proved too strong they shot burning arrows upon the wooden outworks.

Next day there were continually fresh supplies of warriors added to the forces of the assailants, so that the danger of the situation was greatly increased. Diaz, an onlooker, thus wrote:

> The Mexicans fought with such ferocity that if we had been assisted by 10,000 Hectors and as many Orlandos, we should have made no impression on them There were several of our troops who had served in the Italian wars, but neither there nor in the battles with the Turks had they ever seen anything like the desperation shown by these Indians.

Cortés at last drew off his men and sounded a retreat, taking refuge in the fortress. The Mexicans encamped round it, and during the night insulted the besieged, shouting, "The gods have at last delivered you into our hands: the stone of sacrifice is ready: the knives are sharpened."

Cortés now felt that he had not fully understood the character of the Mexicans. The patience and submission formerly shown in deference to the injured Montezuma was now replaced by concentrated arrogance and ferocity. The Spanish general even stooped to request the interposition of the Aztec Emperor; and, at last, when assured that the foreigners would leave his country if a way were opened through the Mexican army he agreed to use his influence. For this purpose

he put on his imperial robes; his mantle of white and blue flowed over his shoulders, held together by its rich clasp of the green *chalchivitl*. The same precious gem, with emeralds of uncommon size, set in gold, profusely ornamented other parts of his dress. His feet were shod with the golden sandals, and his brows covered with the Mexican diadem, resembling in form the pontifical tiara. Thus attired and surrounded by a guard of Spaniards, and several Aztec nobles, and preceded by the golden wand, the symbol of sovereignty, the Indian monarch ascended the central turret of the palace.

At the sight of Montezuma all the Mexican army became silent, partly, no doubt, from curiosity. He assured them that he was no prisoner; that the strangers were his friends, and would leave Mexico of their own accord as soon as a way was opened.

To call himself a friend of the hateful Spaniards was a fatal argument. Instead of respecting their monarch, though in his official robes, the populace howled angry curses at him as a degenerate Aztec, a coward, no longer a warrior or even a man!

A cloud of missiles was hurled at Montezuma, and he was struck to the ground by the blow of a stone on his head. The unfortunate monarch only survived his wounds for a few days, disdaining to take any nourishment, or to receive advice from the Spanish priests.

Meanwhile, Cortés and his army met with an unexpected danger. A large body of the Indian warriors had taken possession of the great temple, at a short distance from the Spanish quarters. From this commanding position they kept shooting a deadly flight of arrows on the Spaniards. Cortés sent his chamberlain, Escobar, with a body of men to storm the temple, but, after three efforts, the party had to relinquish the attempt. Cortés himself then led a storming party, and after some determined fighting reached the platform at the top of the temple where the two sanctuaries of the Aztec deities stood. This large area was now the scene of a desperate battle, fought in sight of the whole capital as well as of the Spanish troops still remaining in the courtyard.

This struggle between such deadly enemies caused dreadful carnage on both sides:

> The edge of the area was unprotected by parapet or battlement; and the combatants, as they struggled in mortal agony, were sometimes seen to roll over the sheer sides of

the precipice together. Cortés himself had a narrow escape from this dreadful fate. . . . The number of the enemy was double that of the Christians; but the invulnerable armor of the Spaniard, his sword of matchless temper, and his skill in the use of it, gave him advantages which far outweighed the odds of physical strength and numbers.

This unparalleled scene of bloodshed lasted for three hours. Of the Mexicans "two or three priests only survived to be led away in triumph"; yet the loss of the Spaniards was serious enough, amounting to forty-five of their best men. Nearly all the others were wounded, some seriously.

After dragging the uncouth monster, Huitzilopochtli, from his sanctuary, the assailants hurled the repulsive image down the steps of the temple, and then set fire to the building. The same evening they burned a large part of the town.

Cortés now resolved upon a night retreat from the capital; but when marching along one of the causeways they were attacked by the Mexicans in such numbers that, when morning dawned, the shattered battalion was reduced to less than half its number. In after years that disastrous retreat was known to the Spanish chroniclers as *Noche Triste*, the "Night of Sorrows."

After a hurried six days' march before the pursuers, Cortés gained a victory so signal that an alliance was speedily formed with Tlascala against Mexico. Cortés built twelve brigantines at Vera Cruz in order to secure the command of Lake Tescuco and thus attempt the reduction of the Mexican capital. On his return to the great lake he found that the throne was now occupied by Guatimozin, a nephew of Montezuma. Using their brigantines the Spanish soldiers now began

the siege of Mexico—"the most memorable event in the conquest of America." It lasted seventy-five days, during which the whole of the capital was reduced to ruins. Guatimozin, the last of the Aztec emperors, was condemned by the Spanish general to be hanged on the charge of treason.

Cortés was now master of all Mexico. The Spanish court and people were full of admiration for his victories and the extent of his conquests; and Charles V appointed him "Captain-General and Governor of New Spain." On revisiting Europe, the Emperor honored him with the order of St. Jago and the title of marquis. Latterly, however, after some failures in his exploring expeditions, Cortés, on his return to Spain, found himself treated with neglect. It was then, according to Voltaire's story, that when Charles asked the courtiers, "Who is that man?" referring to Cortés, the latter said aloud: "It is one, sire, that has added more provinces to your dominions than any other governor has added towns!" Cortés died in his sixty-second year, December 2, 1547.

CHAPTER VIII

BALBOA AND THE ISTHMUS

In the Spanish conquest of America there are three great generals: Cortés, Balbao, and Pizarro. The third may to many readers seem immeasurably superior as explorer and conqueror to the second, but it must be remembered that Pizarro's scheme of discovering and invading Peru was precisely that which Balboa had already pre-

pared. Pizarro could afford to say, "Others have labored, and I have merely entered into their labors."

What, then, was the work done by Balboa, and what prevented him from taking Peru? In 1510, the year before the conquest of Cuba, Balboa was glad to escape from Hispaniola, not to avoid the Spanish cruelties, like Hatuey, the luckless cazique, but to escape from his Spanish creditors. So anxious was he to get on board that he concealed himself in a cask to avoid observation. Balboa, however, had administrative qualities, and after taking possession of the uncleared district of Darien in the name of the King of Spain, he was appointed governor of the new province. He built the town Santa Maria on the coast of the Darien Gulf; but so pestilential was the district (and still is) that the settlers were glad after a short time to remove to the other side of the isthmus.

It was by mere accident that Balboa first heard of a great ocean beyond the mountains of Darien, and of the enormous wealth of Peru, a country hitherto unknown to Spain or Europe. As several soldiers were one day disputing about the division of some gold-dust, an Indian cazique called out:

"Why quarrel about such a trifle? I can show you a region where the commonest pots and pans are made of that metal."

To the inquiries of Balboa and his companions, the cazique replied that by traveling six days to the south they should see another ocean, near which lay the wealthy kingdom.

Resolving to cross the isthmus, notwithstand-

ing a thousand formidable obstructions, Balboa formed a party consisting of 190 veterans, accompanied by 1,000 Indians, and several fierce dogs trained to hunt the naked natives. Such were the difficulties that the "six days' journey" occupied twenty-five before the ridge of the isthmus range was reached.

> Balboa commanded his men to halt, and advanced alone to the summit, that he might be the first who should enjoy a spectacle which he had so long desired. As soon as he beheld the sea stretching in endless prospect below him he fell on his knees; . . . his followers observing his transports of joy rushed forward to join in his wonder, exultation, and gratitude.

That was the moment, September 25, 1513, immortalized in Keats's sonnet:

> When with eagle eyes
> He stared at the Pacific, and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surmise,
> Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Balboa hurried down the western slope of the isthmus range to take formal possession in the name of the Spanish monarch. He found a fishing village there which had been named Panama (i. e., "plenty fish") by the Indians, but had also a reputation for the pearls found in its bay.

In his letter to Spain, Balboa said, to illustrate the difficulties of the expedition, that of all the 190 men in his party there were never more than eighty fit for service at one time. Notwithstanding the wonderful news of the discovery of the "great southern ocean," as the Pacific was then called, Ferdinand overlooked the great services

of Balboa, and appointed a new Governor of Darien called Pedrarias, who instituted a judicial inquiry into some previous transactions of Balboa, imposing a heavy fine as punishment. The new governor committed other acts of great imprudence, and at length Ferdinand felt that he had only superseded the most active and experienced officer he had in the New World. To make amends to Balboa, he was appointed "Lieutenant-Governor of the Countries upon the South Sea," with great privileges and authority. At the same time Pedrarias was commanded to "support Balboa in all his operations, and to consult with him concerning every measure which he himself pursued."

Balboa, in 1517, began his preparations for entering the South Sea and conveying troops to the country which he proposed to invade. With four small brigantines and 300 chosen soldiers (a force superior to that with which Pizarro afterward undertook the same expedition), he was on the point of sailing toward the coasts of which they had such expectations, when a message arrived from Pedrarias. Balboa being unconscious of crime, agreed to delay the expedition, and meet Pedrarias for conference. On entering the palace Balboa was arrested and immediately tried on the charge of disloyalty to the King and intention of revolt against the governor. He was speedily sentenced to death, although the accusation was so absurd that the judges who pronounced the sentence "seconded by the whole colony, interceded warmly for his pardon." "The Spaniards beheld with astonishment and sorrow the public execution of a man

whom they universally deemed more capable than any who had borne command in America, of forming and accomplishing great designs." This gross injustice amounting to a public scandal was accounted for by the malignant influence of the Bishop of Burgos, in Spain, who was the original cause of Balboa being superseded as Governor of Darien.

The expedition designed by Balboa was now relinquished; but the removal of the colony soon afterward to the Pacific side of the isthmus may be considered a step toward the realization of an exactly similar attempt by Pizzaro.

To some historical readers the word "Darien" only recalls the bitter prejudice entertained against William III, our "Dutch King," notwithstanding the special pleading of Lord Macaulay and others. Some Scottish merchants had adopted a scheme recommended by the most reliable authorities * of that age, viz., the settlement of a half-commercial, half-military colony on the Atlantic coast of the isthmus. Such a company, in the words of Paterson, would be masters of the "door of the seas," and the "key of the universe." The East India Companies both of England and Holland showed an envious jealousy of the Scottish merchants, and therefore no assistance was to be expected from the King, although he had given his royal sanction to the Scots Act of Parliament creating the company. The Scottish people, however, zealously continued the scheme. Some 1,200 men "set sail from

* E.g., Paterson, founder of the Bank of England, Fletcher of Saltoun, the Marquis of Tweeddale, then chief Minister of Scotland, Sir John Dalrymple, etc.

Leith amid the blessings of many thousands of their assembled countrymen. They reached the Gulf of Darien in safety, and established themselves on the coast in localities to which they gave the names of New Caledonia and New St. Andrews." The Government of Spain (secretly instigated, it was believed, by the English King) resolved to attack the embryo colony. The shipwreck of the whole scheme soon followed, due undoubtedly more to the jealousy of the English merchants (who believed that any increase of trade in Scotland or Ireland was a positive loss to England) and the bad faith of our Dutch King, than to all other causes whatever. Of the colony, according to Dalrymple (ii, 103), not more than thirty ever saw their own country again.

In 1526 a company of English merchants was formed to trade with the West Indies and the "Spanish Main," and commanded great success. Other merchants did the same. Soon after the Spanish court instituted a coast-guard to make war upon these traders; and as they had full power to capture and slay all who did not bear the King of Spain's commission, there were terrible tales told in Europe of mutilation, torture, and revenge. The Windward Islands having been gradually settled by French and English adventurers, Frederick of Toledo was sent with a large fleet to destroy those petty colonies. This harsh treatment rendered the planters desperate, and under the name of buccaneers,* they continued "a retaliation so horribly savage [*v.* Notes

* Named from *boucan*, a kind of preserved meat, used by those rovers. They had learned this peculiar art of preserving from the native Caribs.

to Rokeby] that the perusal makes the reader shudder. From piracy at sea, they advanced to making predatory descents on the Spanish territories; in which they displayed the same furious and irresistible valor, the same thirst of spoil, and the same brutal inhumanity to their captives." The pride and presumption of Spain were partly resisted by the English monarchs, but not with real effect before the time of Cromwell, strongest of all the rulers of Britain. Under his government of the seas Spain was deprived of the island of Jamaica; and the buccaneers to their disgust found that the flag of the great Protector was a check against all piracy and injustice.

Under Charles II, however, the buccaneers resumed their conflict with the Spanish, and in 1670, Henry Morgan, with 1,500 English and French ruffians resolved to cross the isthmus like Balboa, to plunder the depositories of gold and silver which lay in the city of Panama and other places on the Pacific coast. Having stormed a strong fortress at the mouth of the Chagres River, they forced their way through the entangled forests for ten days, and after much hardship reached Panama, to find it defended by a regular army of twice their number. The Spaniards, however, were beaten, and Morgan thoroughly sacked and plundered the city, taking captive all the chief citizens in order to extort afterward large ransoms.

Ten years afterward the Isthmus of Darien was crossed by Dampier, another celebrated buccaneer, but his party was too small to attack Panama. They seized some Spanish vessels in the bay and plundered all the coast for some dis-

tance. The following description by the bold buccaneer is not without interest to those who consider the present importance of the place:

> Near the riverside stands New Panama, a very handsome city, in a spacious bay of the same name, into which disembogue many long and navigable rivers, some whereof are not without gold; besides that it is beautified by many pleasant isles, the country about it affording a delightful prospect to the sea. . . . The houses are chiefly of brick and pretty lofty, especially the president's, the churches, the monasteries, and other public structures, which make the best show I have seen in the West Indies.

The present prosperity of Panama is due to its large transit trade, which was recently estimated at £15,000,000 a year. The pearl-fisheries, famous at the time of Balboa's visit, have now little value. The narrowest breadth of the isthmus being only thirty miles, there have naturally been many engineering proposals to connect the Pacific and Atlantic oceans by a canal. M. de Lesseps founded a French company in 1881 for the construction of a ship-canal with eight locks, and over forty-six miles in length; but in 1889, the excavations stopped after some 48½ millions of cubic meters of earth and rock had been removed. Meanwhile a railway 47½ miles long connects Colon on the Atlantic with Panama on the Pacific.

The Mexican Isthmus of Tehuantepec, only 140 miles across, separates the Bay of Campeachy from the Pacific, and failing the Panama Canal some engineers were in favor of a *ship-railway* for conveying large vessels *bodily* from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The scheme met with

great favor in the United States, but has not yet been carried out.

The third proposal for connecting the two great oceans is probably the most feasible because it follows the most deeply marked depression of the isthmus. The Nicaraguan Ship-canal will, if the scheme be carried out, pass from Greytown on the Atlantic to Brito on the Pacific, about 170 miles apart, through the republic of Nicaragua, which lies north of Panama and south of Guatemala. One obvious advantage of this ship-canal is that the great lake is utilized, affording already about one-third of the waterway; only twenty-eight miles, in fact, being actual canal, and the rest river, lake, and lagoon navigation. In the latest specifications the engineers proposed to dam up the river (San Juan) by a stone wall seventy feet high and 1,900 feet long, thus raising the water to a level of 106 feet above the sea. Only three locks will be required to work the Nicaraguan Ship-canal.

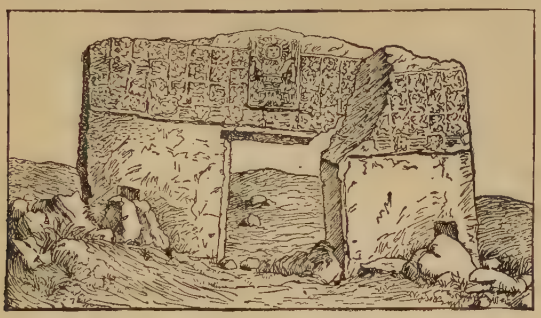
CHAPTER IX

EXTINCT CIVILIZATION OF PERU

§ (A) *Peruvian Archeology*

As the extinct civilization of the Incas of Peru is the most important phase of development among all the American races, so also their prehistoric remains are extremely interesting to the archeologist.

1. *Architecture.*—In the interior of the country we find many remarkable examples of stone building, such as walls of huge polygonal stones, four-sided or five-sided or six-sided, some six feet across, laid without mortar, and so finely polished and adjusted that the blade of a knife can not be inserted between them. The strength of the masonry is sometimes assisted by having the projecting parts of a stone fitting into corre-



Monolith Doorway. Near Lake Titicaca. Fig. 1.

sponding hollows or recesses in the stone above or below it. The stones being frequently extremely hard granite, or basalt, etc., antiquarian travelers have wondered how in early times the natives could have cut and polished them without any metal tools. The ordinary explanation is that the work was done by patiently rubbing one stone against another, with the aid of sharp sand, "time being no object" in the case of the laborers among savage and primitive races. It is believed by most antiquaries that long before

the period of the Incas there was a powerful empire to which we must attribute such Cyclopean ruins; especially as the construction and style differ so greatly from what is found in the Inca period. The huge stones occur at Tiahuanacu (near Lake Titicaca), Cuzco, Ollantay, and the altar of Concacha. Fig. 1 is a broken doorway at Tiahuanacu, composed of huge monoliths. Fig. 2 is an enlargement of an image over the doorway shown in Fig. 1. The doorway forms the entrance to a quadrangular area (400 yards by 350) surrounded by large stones standing on end. The gateway or doorway of Fig. 1 is one of the most marvelous stone monuments existing, being *one block of hard rock,* deeply sunk in the ground. The present height is over seven feet. The whole of the inner side "from a line level with the upper lintel of the doorway to the top" is a mass of sculpture, "which speaks to us," says Sir C. R. Markham, "in difficult riddles of the customs and art culture, of the beliefs and traditions of an ancient" extinct civilization.

The figure in high relief above the doorway (Fig. 2) is a head surrounded by rays, "each terminating in a circle or the head of an animal." Six human heads hang from the girdle, and two more from the elbows. Each hand holds a scepter terminating at the lower end with the head of a condor—that huge American vulture familiar to the Peruvians. That bird of prey was probably an emblem of royalty to the prehistoric dynasty now long forgotten.

Some older historians speak of richly carved statues which formerly stood in this enclosure, and "many cylindrical pillars." Of the masonry

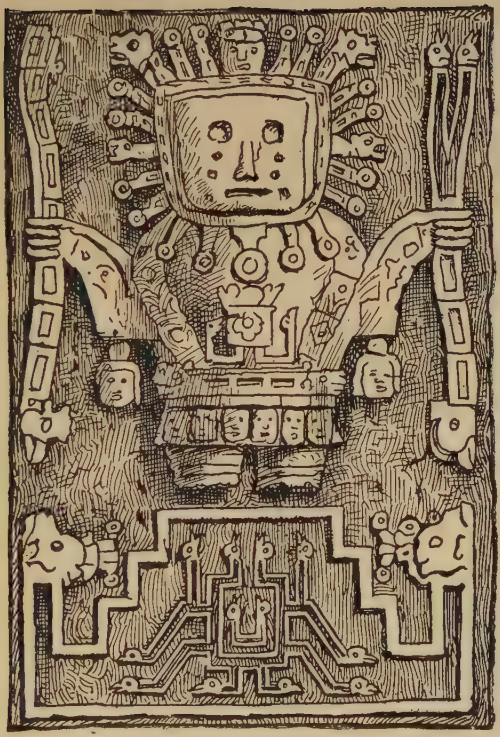


Image over the doorway shown in Fig. 1.
Near Lake Titicaca. Fig. 2.

of these ruins generally, Squier says: "The stone is faced with a precision that no skill can excel, its right angles turned with an accuracy that the most careful geometer could not surpass. I do not believe there exists a better piece of stone-cutting, the material considered, on this or the other continent."

The fortress above Cuzco, the capital of the Incas, is considered the grandest monument of extinct American civilization. "Like the Pyramids and the Coliseum, it is imperishable. . . . A fortified work, 600 yards in length, built of gigantic stones, in three lines, forming walls supporting terraces and parapets. . . . The stones are of blue limestone, of enormous size and irregular in shape, but fitted into each other with rare precision. One stone is twenty-seven feet high by fourteen; and others fifteen feet high by twelve are common throughout the work."

In all the architecture of the prehistoric Peruvians the true arch is not found, though there is an approach to the "Maya arch," formerly described, finishing the doorway overhead by overlapping stones.

The immense fortresses of Ollantay and Pisac are really hills which, by means of encircling walls, have been transformed into immense pyramids with many terraces rising above each other. All large buildings, such as temples and palaces, were laid out to agree with the "cardinal points," the principal entrance always facing the rising sun. The tomb construction of the ancient Peruvians has been already noticed (*v.* chap. iv).

To the south of Cuzco are the ruins of a

temple, Cacha, which is considered to be of a date between the Cyclopean structures already described and the Inca architecture. The chief part is 110 yards long, built of wrought stones; and in the middle of the building from end to end runs a wall pierced by twelve high doorways. There were also two series of pillars which had formerly supported a floor.

Those traces of the Cyclopean builders point to an extremely early date, but several students of the Peruvian antiquities point confidently to distinct evidence of a still more primitive race—to be compared, perhaps, with those builders of "Druidic monuments" whom it is now the fashion to call "neolithic men." Some "cromlechs" or burial-places have been found in Bolivia and other parts of Peru; and in many respects they are parallel to the stone monuments found in Great Britain as well as Brittany and other parts of Europe. Some of those Peruvian cromlechs consist of four great slabs of slate, each about five feet high, four or five in width, and more than an inch thick. A fifth is placed over them. Over the whole a pyramid of clay and rough stones is piled. Possibly that race of cromlech builders bore the same relation to the temple builders described above that the builders of Kits Coty House, between Rochester and Maidstone, bore to the temple builders of Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain. If they had to retreat, as the ice-sheet was driven farther from the torrid zone, then by the theory of the Glacial Period the Cromlech men in both cases would at last be simply Eskimos.

2. *Aqueducts.*—The ancient Peruvians at-

tained great skill in the distribution of water—especially for irrigation. Artificial lakes or reservoirs were formed, so that by damming up the streams in the rainy season a good supply was created for the dry season. Some great monuments still remain of their hydraulic engineering, such as extensive cisterns, solid dikes along the rivers to prevent overflow, tunnels to drain lakes during an oversupply, and, in some places, artificial cascades.

3. *Roads and Bridges.*—The roads and highways of the Incas were so excellent that "in many places they still offer by far the most convenient avenues of transit. They are from fifteen to twenty-five feet in width, bedded with small stones often laid in concrete. As the use of beasts of burden was almost unknown, the roads did not ascend a steep inclination by zigzags but by steps cut in the rock. At certain distances public shelters were erected for travelers, and some of these still offer the best lodging-houses to be found along the routes. Bridges were of wood, of ropes made from maguey fiber, or of stone. Some of the latter are still in excellent condition, in spite of the violence of the mountain torrents which they have spanned for four centuries.

4. *Sculpture.*—The Maya race of Yucatan and Central America were much superior to the prehistoric Peruvians in stone sculpture. Except those examples already referred to under 1, their artists have apparently produced nothing to show skill in workmanship, much less fertility of imagination. That is largely explained by their lack of suitable tools.

5. *Goldsmith's Work.*—In this branch of art the ancient Peruvians greatly excelled, especially in inlaying and gilding. Gold-beating and gilding had been prosecuted to remarkable delicacy, and the very thin layers of gold-leaf on many articles led the Spaniards at first to believe they were of the solid metal. These delicate layers showed ornamental designs, including birds, butterflies, and the like.

6. *Pottery.*—In this department of industrial art the prehistoric Peruvians showed much aptitude both "in regard to variety of design and technical skill in preparing the material. Vases with pointed bottoms and painted sides recalling those of ancient Greece and Etruria are often disinterred along the coast." The merit of those artists lay in perfect imitation of natural objects, such as birds, fishes, fruits, plants, skulls, persons in various positions, faces (often with graphic individuality). Some jars exactly resembled the "magic vases" which are still found in Hindustan, and can be emptied only when held at a certain angle.

7. Though ignorant of perspective and the rules of light and shade, these ancient Peruvians had an accurate eye for color. "Spinning, weaving, and dyeing," to quote Sir C. R. Markham, "were arts which were sources of employment to a great number, owing to the quantity and variety of the fabrics. . . . There were rich dresses interwoven with gold or made of gold thread; fine woolen mantles ornamented with borders of small square plates of gold and silver; colored cotton cloths worked in complicated patterns; and fabrics of aloe fiber and sheep's sinews for

breeches. Coarser cloths of llama wool were also made in vast quantities.

8. The *quipu* (i e., "knot").—Without writing or even any of the simpler forms of pictographs which some Indian races inferior to them in refinement had invented, the Peruvians had no means of sending a message relating to tribute or the number of warriors in an army, or a date,

The Quipu.

except the *quipu*. It consisted of one principal cord about two feet long held horizontally, to which other cords of various colors and lengths were attached, hanging vertically. The knots on the vertical cords, and their various lengths served by means of an arranged code to convey certain words and phrases. Each color and each knot had so many conventional significations; thus *white* = silver, *green* = corn, *yellow* =

gold; but in another quipu, *white* = peace, *red* = war, soldiers, etc. The quipu was originally only a means of numeration and keeping accounts, thus:

a single *knot* =	10	two singles =	20
a double " =	100	two doubles =	200
a triple " =	1,000	etc.	

9. The great stone monuments described in our first section belonged, according to some writers, to a dynasty called Pirua, who ruled over the highlands of Peru and Bolivia long before the times of the Incas. That early race had as the center of their civilization the shores of Lake Titicaca.

10. *The Ancient Capital.*—Cuzco, the center of government till the time of the conquest by the Spaniards, and for a long time the only city in the Peruvian empire, deserves a paragraph under the head archeology. Its wonderful fortress has already been referred to, and there are other Cyclopean remains, such as the great wall which contains the "stone of twelve corners." Some monuments of the Inca period also attract much attention, such as the Curi-cancha temple, 296 feet long, the palace of Amaru-cancha (i. e., "place of serpents"), so called from the serpents sculptured in relief on the exterior. Of these and other buildings Squier remarks that the "joints are of a precision unknown in our architecture; the world has nothing to show in the way of stone-cutting and fitting to surpass the skill and accuracy displayed in the Inca structures of Cuzco." To obtain the site for their capital the Incas had to carry out a great en-

gineering work, by confining two mountain torrents between walls of substantial masonry so solid as to serve even to modern times. The Valley of Cuzco was the source of the Peruvian civilization, center and origin of the empire. Hence the name, Cuzco = "navel," just as the ancient Greeks called Athens *umbilicus terræ*, and our

Gold Ornament (? Zodiac) from a Tomb at Cuzco.

New England cousins fondly refer to Boston, Mass., as "the hub of the universe"!

§ (B) *Peru before the Arrival of the Spaniards*

The "national myth" of the Peruvians was that at Lake Titicaca two supernatural beings appeared, both children of the Sun. One was Manco Capac, the first Inca, who taught the people agriculture; the other was his wife, who

taught the women to spin and weave. From them were lineally derived all the Incas. As representing the Sun, the Inca was high priest and head of the hierarchy, and therefore presided at the great religious festivals. He was the source from which everything flowed—all dignity, all power, all emolument. Louis le Magnifique when at the height of his power might be taken as a type of the emperor Inca: both could literally use the phrase, *L'état c'est Moi,* "The State! I am the State!"

In the royal palaces and dress great barbaric pomp was assumed. All the apartments were studded with gold and silver ornaments.

The worship of the Sun, representing the Creator, the Dweller in Space, the Teacher and Ruler of the Universe,* was the religion of the Incas inherited from their distant ancestry. The great temple at Cuzco, with its gorgeous display of riches, was called "the place of gold, the abode of the Teacher of the Universe." An elliptical plate of gold was fixed on the wall to represent the Deity.

Sufficient evidence is still visible of the engineering industry evinced by the natives before the arrival of Pizarro. We give some particulars of the two principal highways, both joining Quito to Cuzco, then passing south to Chile. First, the high level road, 1,600 miles in length, crossing the great Peruvian table-land, and conducted over pathless sierras buried in snow; with galleries cut for leagues through the living rock, rivers crossed by means of bridges, and ravines of hideous depth filled up with solid masonry.

* According to Sir C. R. Markham, F. R. S.

The roadway consisted of heavy flags of freestone. Secondly, the low level highway along the coast country between the Andes and the Pacific. The prehistoric engineers had here to encounter quite a different task. The causeway was raised on a high embankment of earth, with trees planted along the margin. In the strips of sandy waste, huge piles (many of them to be seen to this day) were driven into the ground to indicate the route.

Another colossal effort was the conveyance of water to the rainless country by the seacoast, especially to certain parts capable of being reclaimed and made fertile. Some of the aqueducts were of great length—one measuring between 400 and 500 miles.

The following table gives the Peruvian calendar for a year:

I. Raymi, the *Festival of the Winter Solstice*, in honor of the Sun	June 22d.
Season of plowing	July 22d.
Season of sowing	August 22d.
II. *Festival of the Spring Equinox*	September 22d.
Season of brewing	October 22d.
Commemoration of the Dead	November 22d.
III. *Festival of the Summer Solstice*	December 22d.
Season of exercises	January 22d.
Season of ripening	February 22d.
IV. *Festival of Autumn Equinox*	March 22d.
Beginning of harvest	April 22d.
Harvesting month	May 22d.

Since Quito is exactly on the equator, the vertical rays of the sun at noon during the equinox cast no shadow. That northern capital, there-

fore, was "held in especial veneration as the favored abode of the great deity."

At the feast of Raymi, or New Year's day, the sacrifice usually offered was that of the llama, a fire being kindled by means of a concave mirror of polished metal collecting the rays of the sun into a focus upon a quantity of dried cotton.

The national festival of the Aztecs we compared to the secular celebration of the Romans; so now the Raymi of the Peruvians may be likened to the Panathenæa of ancient Athens, when the people of Attica ascended in splendid procession to the shrine on the Acropolis.

In Mexico the Spanish travelers often experienced severe famines; and in India, even at the present day (to the disgrace perhaps of our management) nearly every year many thousands die of hunger. It was very different under the ancient Peruvians, because by law "the product of the lands consecrated to the Sun, as well as those set apart for the Incas, was deposited in the *Tambos*, or public storehouses, as a stated provision for times of scarcity."

The Spaniards found those prehistoric agriculturists utilizing the inexhaustible supply of guano found on all the islands of the Pacific. It was not till the middle of the nineteenth century that the British farmer found the value of this fertilizer.

CHAPTER X

PIZARRO AND THE INCAS

When stout-hearted Balboa first reached the summit of the isthmus range and looked south over the Bay of Panama, he might have seen the "Silver Bell," which forms the summit of the mighty volcano Chimborazo. Still farther south in the same direction lay the "land of gold," of which he had heard.

Balboa was unjustly prevented from exploring that unknown country, but among the Spanish soldiers in Panama there were two who determined to carry out Balboa's scheme. The younger, Pizarro, was destined to rival Cortés as explorer and conqueror; Almagro, his companion in the expedition, was less crafty and cruel. Sailing from Panama, the Spanish first landed on the coast below Quito, and found the natives wearing gold and silver trinkets. On a second voyage, with more men, they explored the coast of Peru and visited Tumbez, a town with a lofty temple and a palace for the Incas.

They beheld a country fully peopled and cultivated; the natives were decently clothed, and possessed of ingenuity so far surpassing the other inhabitants of the New World as to have the use of tame domestic animals. But what chiefly attracted the notice of the visitors was such a show of gold and silver, not only in ornaments, but in several vessels and utensils for common use, formed of those precious metals as left no room to doubt that they abounded with profusion in the country.

After his return Pizarro visited Spain and secured the patronage of Charles V, who appointed him Governor and Captain-General of the newly discovered country. In the next voyage from Panama, Pizarro set sail with 180 soldiers in three small ships—"a contemptible force surely to invade the great empire of Peru."

Pizarro was very fortunate in the time of his arrival, because two brothers were fiercely contending in civil war to obtain the sovereignty. Their father, Huana Capac, the twelfth Inca in succession from Manco Capac, had recently died after annexing the kingdom of Quito, and thus doubling the power of the empire. Pizarro made friends with Atahualpa, who had become Inca by the defeat and death of his brother, and a friendly meeting was arranged between them. The Peruvians are thus described by a Spanish onlooker:

First of all there arrived 400 men in uniform; the Inca himself, on a couch adorned with plumes, and almost covered with plates of gold and silver, enriched with precious stones, was carried on the shoulders of his principal attendants. Several bands of singers and dancers accompanied the procession; and the whole plain was covered with troops, more than 30,000 men.

After engaging in a religious dispute with the Inca, who refused to acknowledge the authority of the Pope and threw the breviary on the ground, the Spanish chaplain exclaimed indignantly that the Word of God had been insulted by a heathen.

Pizarro instantly gave the signal of assault: the martial music struck up, the cannon and muskets began to fire, the

horse rallied out fiercely to the charge, the infantry rushed on sword in hand. The Peruvians, astonished at the suddenness of the attack, dismayed with the effect of the fire-arms and the irresistible impression of the cavalry, fled with universal consternation on every side. Pizarro, at the head of his chosen band, soon penetrated to the royal seat, and seizing the Inca by the arm, carried him as a prisoner to the Spanish quarters.

For his ransom Atahualpa agreed to pay a weight of gold amounting to more than five millions sterling.

Instead of keeping faith with the Inca by restoring him to liberty, Pizarro basely allowed him to be tried on several false charges and condemned to be burned alive.

After hearing of the enormous ransom many Spaniards hurried from Guatemala, Panama, and Nicaragua to share in the newly discovered booty of Peru, the "land of gold." Pizarro, therefore, being now greatly reenforced with soldiers, "forced his way to Cuzco, the capital. The riches found there exceeded in value what had been received as Atahualpa's ransom.

As Governor of Peru, Pizarro chose a new site for his capital, nearer the coast than Cuzco, and there founded Lima. It is now a great center of trade. Pizarro lived here in great state till the year 1542, when his fate reached him by means of a party of conspirators seeking to avenge the death of Almagro, his former rival, whom he had cruelly executed as a traitor. On Sunday, June 26th, at midday, while all Lima was quiet under the siesta, the conspirators passed unobserved through the two outer courts of the palace, and speedily despatched the soldier-adventurer, in-

trepidly defending himself with a sword and buckler. "A deadly thrust full in the throat," and the tale of daring Pizarro was told.

Raro antecedentem scelestum
Deseruit pede Poena claudo.

When
Did Doom, though lame, not bide its time,
To clutch the nape of skulking Crime?

W E. GLADSTONE.

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